

TRI¹⁵³ continental

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against terrorism and against the war

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*It's not because you have fallen
That the light from your star shines less*

SPECIAL



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Alfredo Rostgaard: Renowned Cuban artist, who has worked with *Tricontinental* since the beginning and has created numerous posters that today are a part of the OSPAAAL collection

TRicontinental



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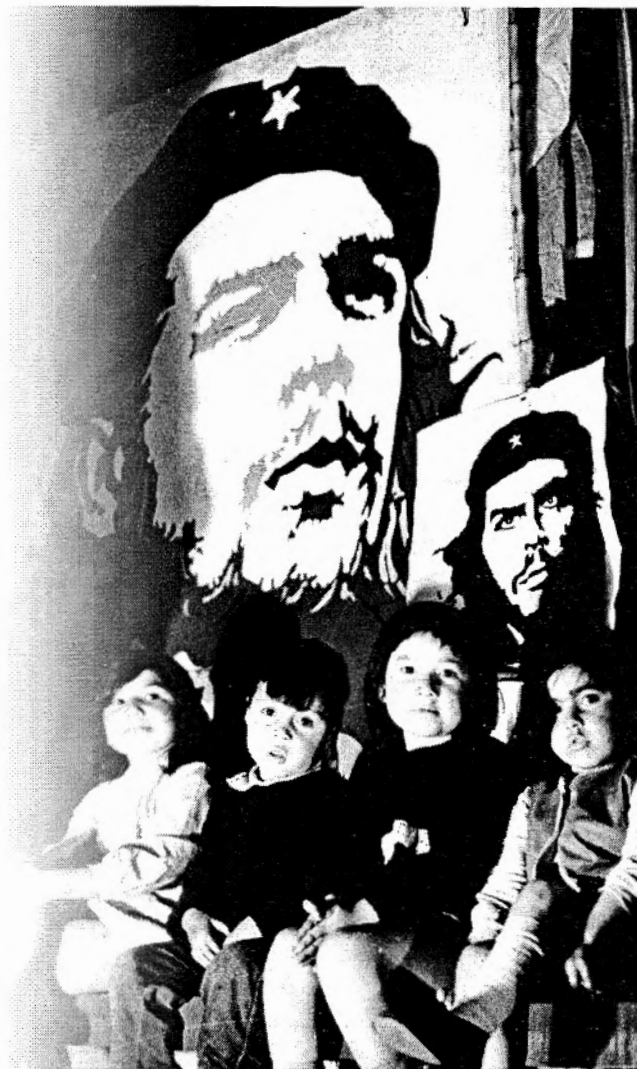
The Endless Fight

Nobody mocked death as much as that man who spent his last birthday “in the cold watering place, awaiting news” and thinking that he had arrived to 39 “and an age is inevitably approaching that demands some thought about my future as a guerrilla fighter”...

Like his family of blood, many do not celebrate the mournful October days because they recognize him everywhere, each time livelier. They have seen him in Seattle and in Genoa, in Quebec or in Porto Alegre, marching at the head of the multitudes that protest and as part of them. They know that he founds revolutionary schools in the social movements of Brazil, Argentina, Mexico; that he fights side by side with Fidel in the arduous battle of the Cubans to maintain and enrich their socialist practice. They feel his tireless rebelliousness in the silent resistance of the native peoples who survive the system’s daily killing.

Ernesto Che Guevara continues to be that “very strange man” described by Fidel Castro, who “was capable of conjugating in his personality not only the characteristics of a man of action but also of a man of thought, of a man of immaculate revolutionary virtues and of extraordinary human sensibility, added to an iron character, to a steel will, to an indomitable tenacity”. And such a man does not die until the rest of humankind decides it. As long as they keep needing him with a common request, everyone on Earth make him stand up, continuously, like the corpse in “Masa”, the poem by César Vallejo.

Che’s survival is not a miracle of popular imagery that is to be observed in the Bolivian peasant prayers to Saint Ernesto de La Habana. Neither is it a result of the myth claimed by those who filled their pockets with infamous biographies to make us lose hope. It is the natural

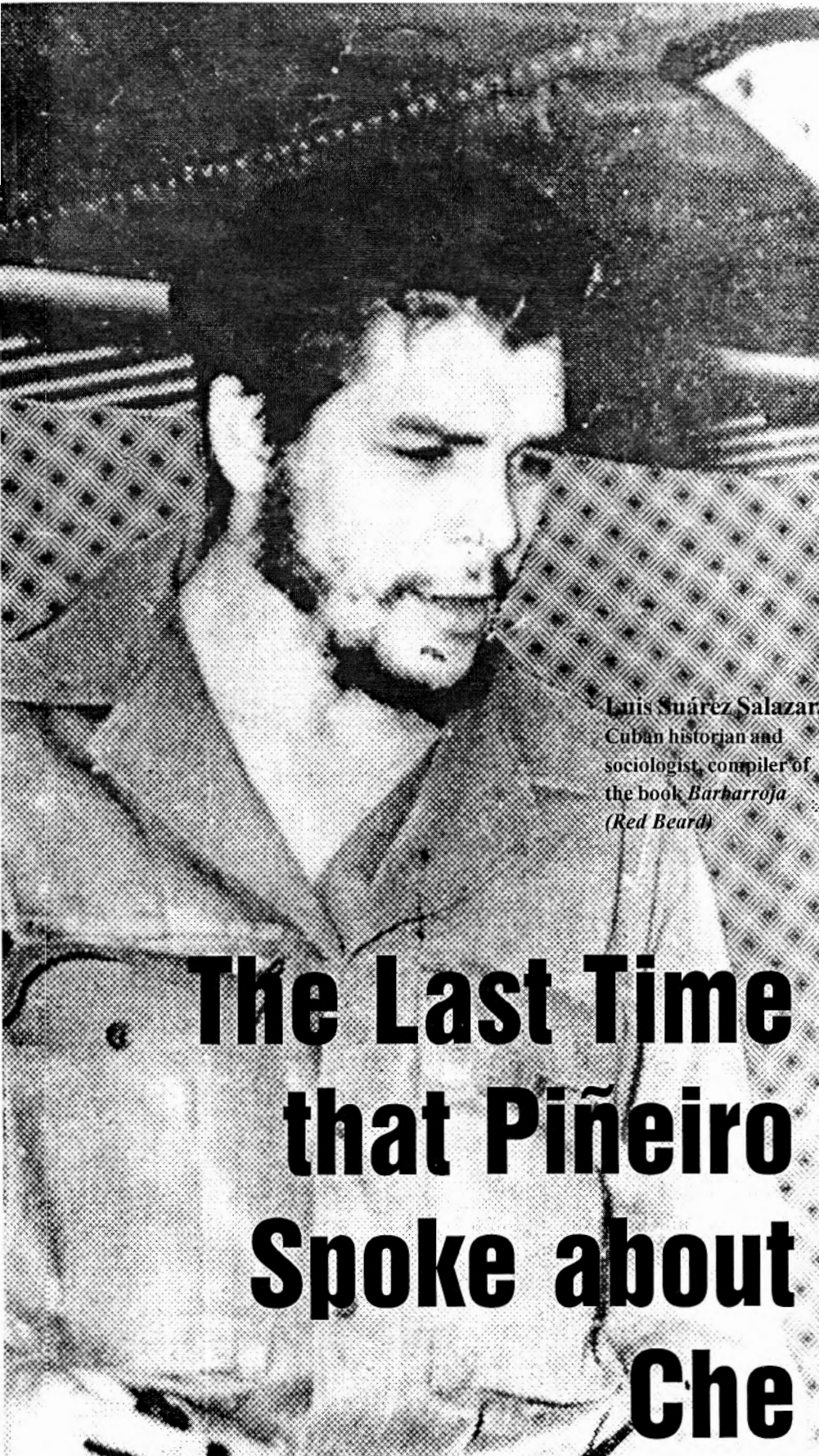


consequence of a life totally devoted to the struggle and ready to point out the road with the example. Just the reading of his excellent works or the testimonies of his comrades is enough for Che to continue to be born in each one of his contemporaries at this very moment and to live as his murderers of 1967 did not wish to have him.

In Santa Clara, heart of Cuba, where he emerged as Che Comandante and friend in his transit to American history, he and his comrades of the Bolivian guerrilla – including Tania, paradigm of combatant woman – live in their calling to honest people. And never has the Memorial been alone, as never does the flame go out in tribute to those who did not resign themselves with fighting and dying for the continental cause, but continue to fight.

The Editor ■





Luis Suárez Salazar,
Cuban historian and
sociologist, compiler of
the book *Barbarroja*
(*Red Beard*)

The Last Time that Piñeiro Spoke about Che

The First National University Seminar on Che and the Challenges of the Third Millennium was held February 25-28, 1998, sponsored by the *Che Lives* Group (Grupo CHE VIVE) of the University of Havana. The organizers and Dr. Juan Vela Valdés, Rector of the University, invited Commander Manuel Piñeiro Losada to address the participants and other Cubans and foreigners who were invited to attend this important student seminar, and he did so on the morning of Saturday, February 28, 1998, speaking for almost two hours in the Manuel Sanguily Auditorium of the School of Philosophy and History.

After some brief introductory remarks, Piñeiro, with his customary directness and informality, answered questions from the floor. Unfortunately, not all of his comments were recorded. Andrea Salvagno of Uruguay, one of those invited to attend, was the only one who taped his replies, on her own tape recorder. The transcription of the tape she kept and the notes taken by the editor of this book made it possible to reconstruct a part of the dialogue, which was the last time Commander Manuel Piñeiro Losada spoke about Che's Bolivian feats.

That same evening, the renowned Cuban internationalist and Latin Americanist attended the closing session of the student seminar, which was held in the Aula Magna of the University of Havana. None of us who had the opportunity to be there with him in this enthusiastic recognition given by the organizers and assistants could imagine that this simple but emotion packed ceremony would go down in history as the well-deserved homage of a new generations of students to the legendary Commander Red Beard.

Because of the importance of both those events, we are presenting an edited summary of some of Commander

Manuel Piñeiro Losada's reflections on that memorable occasion.

P: Commander, did the leaders of the Cuban Revolution intend to send new members to reinforce Che's guerrilla column in a second stage?

MP: There was talk of this. Criteria had been drawn up for selecting some of the comrades with whom Che had spoken and who wanted to join the struggle in a second stage. Logically, it would take time to send them, by ones and twos, depending on Che's decisions and how events developed in Bolivia.

The problem was quality, not quantity. The combatants who were selected had to be experienced, both militarily and politically. They had to be trustworthy in political terms. In their selection, we also had to consider how determined they were to struggle and their physical condition. Those are very important factors in a guerrilla struggle, and even more so in the survival stage of the guerrillas. We had all the possibilities and backing for continuing to support Che's guerrilla effort when he should ask for it and when the conditions made this possible – beginning with Fidel and with the support of all the party, and above all, of the Cuban people.

Why did Che decide on Bolivia?

I've already explained this several times. The 1964 coup triggered a rise in demonstrations, protests, strikes by the miners and repression against many leaders of the leftist and other people's movements. Some of those leaders were taken to concentration camps outside La Paz. When we analyzed that situation, we saw that it wasn't entirely favorable to the enemy. A guerrilla project that would move the scene of struggle from the cities and mines to the mountains, with a guerrilla column of Bolivians, some Peruvians and a group of Cuban comrades with guerrilla and other military experience, led by Che – with all his experience – would open the way for a revolutionary offensive.

Another factor was the existence of a group of cadres of the Bolivian Communist Party and other leftist organizations that were willing to join that international project – as some of them did. Therefore, as I have said before, I think that, if Che had managed to survive the first stage of the guerrilla struggle, which is the most difficult one, the prospects for struggle in Bolivia and

Commander, excuse me, but in the interview you gave *Tricontinental* magazine, you said that Che made some mistakes in military tactics.

That's not what I literally said. You are speaking of an interpretation of my words. What I said was that, on analyzing the situation, you come to the conclusion that Che's decision to divide the guerrilla column in two, one part headed by himself and the other by Comrade Vilo



Artwork by Luch

eventually in the Southern Cone could have been different.

What do you believe caused that defeat?

I've already gone into that quite thoroughly, too. I think that one factor was Mario Monje's negative attitude and the split which that caused in the Bolivian Communist Party. It meant that the Bolivian young communists and some cadres of the Bolivian Communist Party who were committed to Che's project couldn't join the guerrilla struggle in the end. It also meant that the urban support, information and logistics network for purchasing certain things that the guerrillas needed (such as medicine) was hit prematurely. In the first stage, lack of support from the urban networks, from the cities nearest the guerrilla area, plays an important, though not decisive, role.

Acuña, was based more on humanitarian reasons than on military ones...

But, if I'm not mistaken, in that part you said that he wasn't very familiar with the area in which he was operating. However, other versions that aren't as authoritative and reliable as yours state that, before Che left for Bolivia, Regis Debray visited several areas and that it was Che himself who chose the area in which they would begin the struggle. Would you go into this in more detail, please?

In the interview you mention, I spoke of the analysis and decisions Che made before leaving for Bolivia. I also said that, after operating in an unfavorable area for five or six months, looking for Comrade Vilo Acuña, Che decided to head north from Ñancahuazú. I think that, when Che spoke of the possibility of going to another, more fa-

avorable area, he was thinking of the area that Debray had studied from the political and sociological points of view.

Independently of the rather unethical attitudes which that French intellectual adopted later on and his positions opposed to the Cuban Revolution, it must be said that he did make a good study of that area from the viewpoint of land ownership, the agrarian contradictions, the composition of the military forces, the number of officers and weapons, the tradition of revolutionary struggle, the topographic and climatic conditions, etc. In short, it was an exhaustive, integral analysis of the characteristics of that area in term of its potential for guerrilla operations.

Che read Debray's report while he was here in Cuba. I emphasize this because, if I'm not mistaken, Debray said somewhere that he doubted that we had passed his report on to Che and that Che had read it before leaving for Bolivia. What happened was that, when Che read it, it was already urgent that he enter Bolivian territory. I myself think that he ruled it out at first without completely rejecting that possibility. Remember that those of us who have been guerrillas and revolutionary leaders don't give full credence to the information we're given until we have verified it and seen things for ourselves. Logically, the analysis that somebody else makes can be objective to some extent, but it may also be somewhat subjective. And, in revolutionary projects, any degree of subjectivism, no matter how small, may cost human lives or even wipe out the project itself.

I can say, however, that Che liked the analysis, and I'm quite sure he thought it was an area where the guerrilla struggle could be developed in Bolivia later on. But there was a contradiction between that assessment and the urgency he felt for going to Bolivia as soon as possible. Perfectly logically, he felt that, the more time that passed, the greater the risk of

the enemy's hearing of the project. Moreover, some cadres of the Communist Party, the Cuban comrades who were in Bolivia and the sectors that were pledged to the plan had already taken many steps. The logistical support was already at Ñancahuazú, the farm had been bought, weapons had been moved there, etc.

Che was worried about possible betrayal and about the possibility that one of the comrades who had taken part in those movements might be captured, causing a situation that would end or delay his plan. That would have implied that he would have to wait longer to go to Bolivia, and that wasn't in his plans. I think that those psychological factors meant that he was tense and worried, which multiplied the contradiction I've already mentioned. The comrades who were there had already looked for resources and considered that the Ñancahuazú farm was a good place to use as an arms depot and as a reception and transit point for the Bolivian, Peruvian and other comrades. It was hard for Che to give more weight to a report of Debray's – that in any case, should be verified in person – than to those realities.

Considering Che's personality, I think that his decision to keep looking for Comrade Vilo Acuña and the other members of his small column for five or six months was based on his sense of solidarity and his reluctance to abandon any comrade. He was also determined to keep the promise he had made to Vilo Acuña and the other comrades that they should meet in 15 or 20 days. However, from a military viewpoint, and with the facility always provided by retrospective analyses of events and their results, I believe that it was not a good decision, because it was governed by humanitarian factors of solidarity rather than by military ones.

Obviously, you would have had to be there to make a better analysis of the various alternatives, but I think the facts

show that too much time was lost and that the guerrilla column suffered seriously from attrition during those five or six months, when other Bolivian combatants couldn't join it because of the obstacles created by Mario Monje, former general secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party.

As I have said on other occasions, that attitude of Monje's prevented many young Bolivians, both members of the communist youth and members of the Communist Party – including 15 or 20 Bolivian scholarship students who were here, had been trained and were ready to go – from joining Che's guerrilla column. The students couldn't be sent, because the channels established for their entering Bolivia – and especially the guerrilla areas – weren't functioning. Some of those who left ahead of the main group told us that they weren't given replies or facilities for joining the guerrilla struggle.

Therefore, that was another key factor which meant that, at the same time that Che's guerrilla column was suffering from serious attrition because of battles with the army, it couldn't receive the reinforcement of a group of Bolivian comrades who were well prepared from the military point of view, in good shape physically and politically motivated to join the internationalist column headed by Che.

Would you clarify the role played by the Bolivian Communist Party?

By sectors of the leadership, to be more precise, since we are in a university atmosphere...

Some of the things I've read contain information showing that, before Che's arrival, there were plenty of signs pointing to the negative attitude that Mario Monje would adopt. For example, Monje came to get training here and dropped out before completing the course. Another group of comrades from the Bolivian Communist Party did the same. And, at one point, I've been

Considering Che's personality, I think that his decision to keep looking for Comrade Vilo Acuña and the other members of his small column for five or six months was based on his sense of solidarity and his reluctance to abandon any comrade

told, Monje also expressed a measure of opposition to guerrilla struggle, stating that he preferred an insurreccional approach. Were all those signs taken into account – and, if so, to what extent – or did the desire for struggle that usually sweeps all revolutionaries prevail at that time?

Without that desire, we would all stay home reading the newspaper...

Exactly, but I'd like to know your opinion of the other Bolivian comrades who took part in the struggle and of the Bolivian Army. I think it contained a revolutionary seed, especially after its reorganization following the 1952 revolution headed by the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR). At that time, the Bolivian Army drew on the people. How did you view that situation at the time?

Hey now, comrade, you take the cake with your questions! That's about seven in one...

Let me give you some background. Our relations with the Bolivian Communist Party – like those with the other Communist Parties in Latin America – were very close. As you surely know, Cuba had an embassy in La Paz until 1964. The diplomatic relations between Cuba and Bolivia were broken that year, but we continued to have very good relations with all the Bolivian political forces: with all of the leftist and other progressive political parties; the people's, student, miners' and farmers' movements; and even officers – some of them high ranking – of the Bolivian Armed Forces. Some of them expressed their solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and cooperated with us, either by giving us information or by carrying out some actions against the U.S. policy in Latin America.

That is, ever since the 1960s, there has been great liking for and support of the Cuban Revolution among the people in Bolivia, and even within the Army and the military high command.

Moreover, when Che was thinking of his internationalist, continental project, he analyzed and discussed with Comrade Masetti the idea of having a guerrilla column in Argentina. On the basis of that commitment, other Argentine and Cuban comrades were chosen, some of whom were killed in the struggle.

To succeed in that effort, they needed the support of comrades who were familiar with the area, logistics and training for the combatants, so they went to the Bolivian Communist Party and Mario Monje, who decided to give them the support they requested. At that point, even though he was in Moscow, he kept the promises he made. That – plus the support of certain solidarity structures of the National Liberation Front of Algeria – enabled Masetti and some other comrades to go from Algiers to Argentina, via Bolivia. A group of Bolivian cadres – including the Peredo brothers – who would later play a courageous, heroic role in the guerrilla column which Che commanded, did outstanding work in support of those efforts.

On that occasion (that is, while they were preparing for the guerrilla struggle in Argentina), some of the weapons were obtained from friends in the Army and from agrarian leaders who had kept weapons of various calibers since the 1952 revolution.

After Barrientos's coup, some of them formed armed columns of farmers and small landowners to keep the military government from taking away the land that the 1952 revolution had given to them. They were very good fighters. They also provided some of the weapons that Che's guerrillas used. Some of them lived in the Santa Cruz de la Sierra area, which was relatively near the area in which Che was operating. Unfortunately, no actions could ever be coordinated with those forces. I'm sure that, if that had been achieved, it would have dispersed the enemy and would

also have served as a stimulus to the revolutionaries and to the Bolivian patriots. Some of those agrarian leaders – such as Sandoval, in the Santa Cruz de la Sierra area – had a lot of political prestige.

There were some other factors that I don't think I should reveal as yet. What I mean by all this is that the traitorous attitude that Mario Monje adopted after his meeting with Che wasn't as clear then as it is now, especially because of the promises he had made to the top leaders of the Cuban Revolution. We had a lot of information about the contradictions that were developing within the Bolivian Army and about the revolutionary potential of some of its officers. Obviously, the fact that Che's guerrillas didn't manage to survive the first stage aborted both those possibilities and the help that the more combative sectors of the Bolivian farmers and the miners' and student movements could have given them.

Commander, what is your opinion of the most recent biographies of Che?

Many of them contain insidious elements, based on the subjective thesis that Che was isolated, left alone and abandoned by the leaders of the Cuban Revolution – especially because of the supposed differences that existed between Che and Fidel and because of the pressure that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had supposedly brought to bear on our country. According to those authors, those contradictions and pressures forced Fidel to get rid of Che and offer him a way out through revolutionary, internationalist projects. Those insidious suppositions can be considered calumny in many cases. They are the main theme of many of the books that were brought out on the 30th anniversary of Che's death in combat – some more obviously and others more subtly, but those ideas are definitely there.



There are other books, which, though not based on that theme, contrast the political personalities of Che and Fidel and the course of the construction of socialism in Cuba with Che's thinking. In general, they try to show the existence of contradictions between Fidel and the rest of the Cuban revolutionary leadership, on the one hand, and Che, on the other. They take isolated ideas out of context to shore up this thesis and try to prove that there were ideological differences between the two revolutionary leaders and between Che's thinking and the subsequent course of the Cuban Revolution. I think that such fallacies should be challenged and shown up for what they are.

How did the first reports of Che's death reach Cuba?

By a wire photo that came in through the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT), which Comrade Papito

Serguera headed at the time. Later, another wire photo came in through the Prensa Latina news agency. They were immediately sent to me, and I called Comrade Fidel and showed them to him. Logically, our first reaction was to doubt them. Even though we recognized that the body in the photos was very similar to Che, they were images that you don't want to accept.

Then another, more detailed wire photo came in. It convinced us that it was Che's body. Fidel called Celia Sánchez and asked her to find Comrade Aleida March, who was in the Escambray mountains at the time. Aleida came by plane, and Fidel went to see her and explained the situation. You can imagine what a sad task that was. Then, after that, we began to work on how to convey that terrible news to the Cuban people and to other peoples in the world. We knew it would have a terrible

psychological effect on our people in Cuba, all revolutionaries, and people all over the world – which was why it was important to tell them carefully, for Fidel to choose just the right words with which to tell the news a few days later through national and international media.

Commander, one final question: What can you tell us about the present situation of the guerrilla struggle in Latin America, especially in Colombia and Chiapas?

Right now, the Colombian situation is an exception to the rule in Latin America. In Colombia, there are thousands of armed men with experience in the struggle and with veteran cadres who are waging a political and military offensive. The system is filled with internal contradictions. The Army is being hit hard. There are signs of demoralization. How long will this last? What rhythm will it have? How will it advance, and at what speed? This depends on the specific conditions and the outcome of the plans held by the Colombian guerrilla movement.

Objectively, it is the only revolutionary armed movement right now that has possibilities for developing and becoming a political-military force with which, in my judgment and according to what the Colombian press says, the government will have to seek rapprochement, discussion and dialogue if it really wants to guarantee peace and stability in Colombia. As you know, the Colombian guerrilla leaders don't want just any kind of peace. In view of the goals they have sought in their long struggles and of the present balance of power, they want and are calling for a

peace that will mean better living conditions for all Colombians.

Peoples' struggles are on the rise throughout Latin America. Most of them are legal unarmed demands aimed against neoliberal policies. Those struggles create the possibility that, basing itself on its specific conditions, the political vanguard in each country may use the conditions that are being created by those policies which exclude and marginalize the people – generating more unemployment, alienation, repression and hunger – to stimulate, channel and organize their resistance. That is, those struggles may make it possible for the political vanguards to gather political strength and gain new ground for struggle in those nations.

In many Latin American countries, the revolutionary left has gained political ground by having its representatives elected to positions of responsibility such as mayors, municipal councilors, grassroots leaders and governors in a longer-range plan. In that process, they gain experience as leaders, administering resources, building and gaining strength from the political point of view, based on the destabilization that neoliberal policies are generating in almost all the governments in the region. Because of steadily declining budgets, they decide to sell national resources to private interests and decentralize public administration. As a result, discontent is increasing, not only in the capital cities, against the central governments, but also in other regions – the provinces outside the capital.

This has made it possible – for example, in Brazil – for the left to control

an important number of governors' offices, state governments and mayor's offices in areas with several million inhabitants. Logically, there are differences among them. Some fall into political opportunism and pragmatism, but others have more encouraging, longer-range plans aimed at gathering the strength required to challenge the power of the ruling classes. What are their immediate prospects? It isn't easy to say. I think you have to view them in terms of the circumstances in each country and the growing discontent and resistance that neoliberal policies are generating. The situations in Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are all different.

However, I think that – with an intelligent, correct policy – the strength required for the left to become an important factor in the Latin American and Caribbean political arena will gradually be amassed. Of course, this will be achieved only by persevering in the struggles against the status quo and against imperialist oppression. As Che said, the peoples' revolutionary struggles and broad anti-imperialist unity are absolutely necessary to create the subjective conditions that will make the new victories of the peoples' causes possible some day.

Thank you very much.

¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre! (Forever Onwards to Victory!)

From the book, *Barbarroja, (Red Beard)* from Tricontinental Publishing, pgs. 251-262 ■

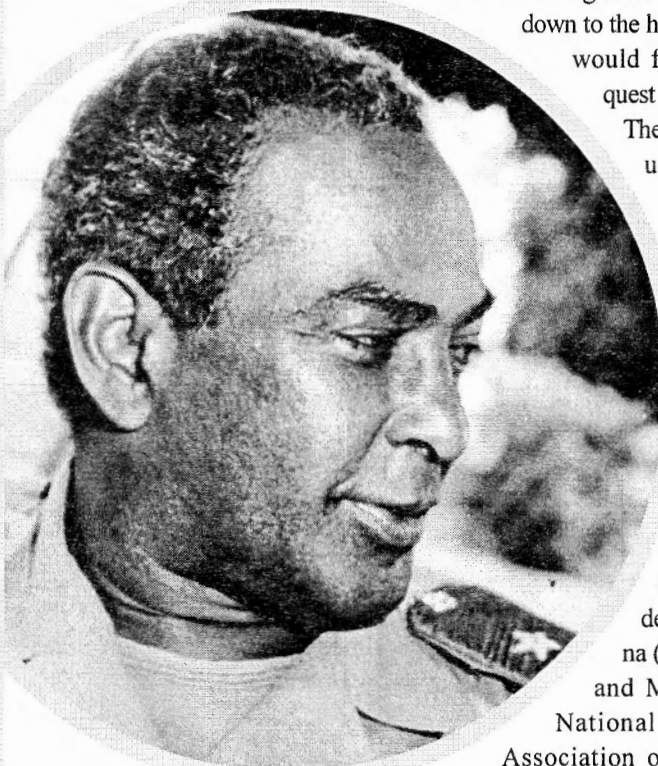
I was Che's Friend

María de las Nieves Galá,
Cuban journalist

From Harry Villegas (Pombo)'s new occupation as head of the Secretaría de Trabajo Patriótico-Militar en la Dirección Nacional de la Asociación de Combatientes de la Revolución Cubana (Secretariat of Patriotic and Military Work in the National Office of the Association of Cuban Revolution Combatants), he evokes the past in which he discovered the extraordinary human being that was the Heroic Guerrilla

It was a day in November 1957; I don't exactly remember the date. I was part of El Chino Figueredo's platoon, when suddenly we saw Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara approaching, accompanied by an escort. He came riding on his mule, with his cap slung to the side. He looked at us and asked Figueredo who we were and what we were doing. We told him that we came to fight to overthrow the tyranny.

He asked us what we had. I showed him my small 22 caliber gun and a very old, little revolver. He burst out laughing and upbraided us: With this you think that you can overthrow Bastista! Right then and there, he suggested that we that we head to our hometown (Yara), where there were many soldiers, and grab one and disarm him – then we would be better equipped to fight.



In this way, the current General of the Harry Villegas Tamayo Brigade met Che, the Argentinean that was already a legend in the Sierra Maestra. He never imagined that his destination would be intertwined with that epic man, indefatigable fighter, and maker of dreams. Under Che's orders, he

would wage intense battles, would go down to the historical fighting fields, would follow the Guevarian quest to Africa and Bolivia. They would be ten years of unforgettable experiences and feats.

Today, I have him in front of me, natural, affable, sincere. From his new occupation as head of the Secretaría de Trabajo Patriótico-Militar en la Dirección Nacional de la Asociación de Combatientes de la Revolución Cubana (Secretariat of Patriotic and Military Work in the National Office of the Association of Cuban Revolution Combatants), he evokes the past in which he discovered the extraordinary human being that was the Heroic Guerrilla.

When Che did not accept you for not having an appropriate rifle, what did you think of him as a leader?

It really shocked me. I cannot tell you what I thought of him as a leader,

but only that I was shocked because he made me go back to look for arms. After we returned, we understood that he had been right. In his assessment, the most important thing was not if we had found arms, but rather our decision to fight.



He was not like some people see him as only strict; he was when he had to be. It was in his family that he could allow himself to show his side as a human being with varied cultural interests, who liked poetry, reading and writing

In the Minas de Frio School of Recruits, what sort of things did you appreciate the most about Che?

By then we had some more time to be with him, and we got to know him a little better. Che was a man who knew what he wanted; he wanted to have in his troop only the most resolute, the most determined people. He looked for ways to purge his troop. Maybe to some he could appear a little too tough, such as insisting on a formation every morning, knowing that the enemy planes would be overhead, but this also gave him the opportunity to ask people who couldn't take it to leave.

What was the most important lesson that you learned from Commandant Guevara?

I think that it was his immense capacity for work and his strong dedication to the Revolution, which you can sum up in one word: fidelity. Che had a deep concept of loyalty and this was something that he tried to instill in all of his subordinates. Loyalty to

principles, to the Revolution, and especially to Fidel, carried the most weight in his revolutionary thought.

And you, as a young person, didn't sometimes feel misunderstood by him?

I don't think so. I was required to correct the mistakes that I had made. But I didn't feel misunderstood because in the most difficult times, I always had his recognition and concern.

Do you remember a time when you were punished by Che?

One time, during the invasion in Villa Clara, specifically in Manacas, he was seated at a table, upon which was a revolver. Suddenly, I grabbed it, stood by a window, and shot at a tree. He asked me what happened. I answered: Nothing. I shot at a tree and I missed. Quickly, he responded, Well, little comrade, for being so undisciplined and such a bad marksman, you will be punished by three days without food.

Well, at night, my friends snuck food to me. Che realized what was happening, and on the third day, he told me to get ready to go somewhere with him. I told him that I was very weak, but he acted as if he hadn't heard me. We left, Che on horseback and I on foot. We arrived at a farmer's house, who had invited him to eat. I remember there was rice and chicken on the table, which made my mouth water. We all sat down, and I, with my plate in front of me, didn't even take a bite. I suggested to the farmer who was beside me that he ask the Commandant why I wasn't eating. Che simply responded: You have a mouth and you have food. There's nothing stopping you; it's only a matter of conscience. Of course, I couldn't eat, still not having completed the third day of punishment.

Of all the time you were with Che during Cuba's revolutionary struggle, what do you remember the most?

I have a very nice memory of something that happened in Santa Clara. I had lost my horse; he was cinnamon-

colored with a moon-shaped patch on his head, and we called him Ricardito. We left to look for him and found another that was similar, almost identical. Che took a look at him, but didn't say anything. Then Ricardito appeared.

Che told us that he had wanted to allow us the luxury of believing that we had deceived him, but that he had realized that the new horse didn't trot the same way as Ricardito did. That day, he affectionally hugged us all, although he told us: Don't do this anymore to me, you know who I am, and you are going to suffer a severe punishment.

And Bolivia...

I think that the most memorable moment was when we saw each other after having been separated for several months during the whole organizational stage. On the riverbanks of the Río Grande, my group met up with Commandant Guevara, disguised, but him. This had a huge emotional impact for us because we had been organizing the struggle for months, constantly worrying about developing actions and events, when all of a sudden, we saw each other again. This was emotional for me.

General, you stayed close to Che for many years, even ending up living in his house. What did you think of him in the role of father?

He was an exceptional father because he tried to devote the little bit of time that he had to his family. On Sundays, in general, when he didn't go to do volunteer work, we tried to go out together. He would go with us to the beach, to Puerto Escondido, which was a place that he really liked. In addition, many times he brought his kids along to do volunteer work. I believe that, taking into account all of the limitations of a revolutionary so dedicated to his work as Che was, he was an exceptional father. He was very affectionate and affable and enjoyed revelling with his boys. He was not like some people see him as only strict; he was when he had to be, but he preferred

to show trust in his children. It was in his family that he could allow himself to show his side as a human being with varied cultural interests, who liked poetry, reading and writing.

As you wrote in your book, *Pombo, un hombre de la guerrilla del Che (Pombo, A Man in Che's Guerrilla Band)*, on October 10, 1967, when you learned through the radio of the death of Commandant Guevara at Quebrada del Yuro, for the first time in your life your tears flowed without somebody else crying next to you. You wrote: I understood more than ever that Che had been like a father to me. When did you first have this feeling?

I don't know when that was; it is very difficult to say. My feelings should have first surfaced with the day-to-day activities we did together, during the time that I was at his side, with everything he taught me, in the kindness that he always showed us. For example, I was thrilled when the Commandant trusted us to take care of him, to have his security as our main duty. This made me happy because whenever he resolved to go someplace, he would keep us in mind and take us along. This truly demonstrated a degree of trust, of companionship. And naturally, one goes on appreciating these things without feeling the need to ponder them. They go on taking place in a spontaneous way, and that is the birth of feelings, a product of relationships and of familiarity.

And you feel that you were Che's friend?

Friendship is reciprocal. And Che's concept of friendship was one of principles, within the revolutionary framework. I think that in this Che was loyal. I agree with Martí, that people are true friends when they are capable of feeling not only the happiness, but also the sorrow and pain of others, and I viewed my relationship with Che in this way. When I think of all the bonds we shared, I believe that I was Che's friend ■

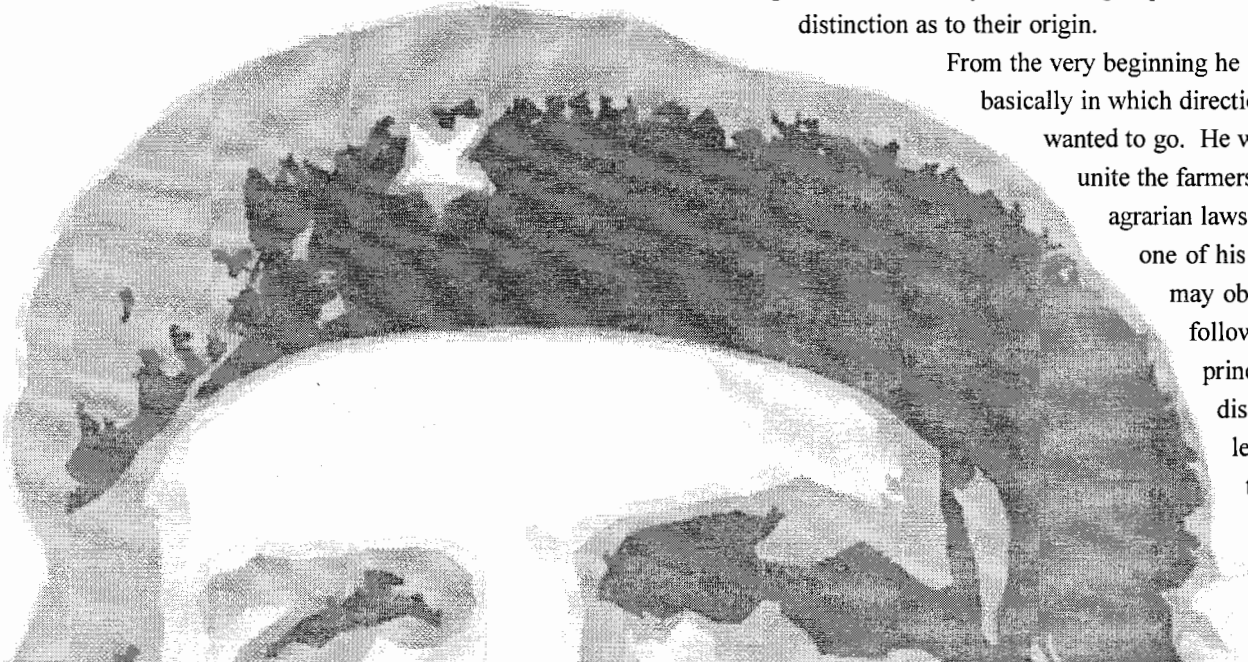
Che, a consequent student of the ideas of Lenin and Martí, follower of Fidel's practice in time and space, played and plays a historical role in the unity of the revolutionary movement both in Cuba and other parts of the world.

Because of his political and ideological characteristics, our Commander-in-Chief Fidel gave him the difficult mission of reinforcing the guerrilla and underground warfare and unity in the center of the country.

As comrade Fidel expressed in the text of his order instructing the advance to Las Villas... *"Commander Ernesto Guevara is appointed chief of all rebel units of the 26 of July Movement that operate in the province of Las Villas in both rural and urban zones; he is granted faculties to collect the contributions established by our military orders and dispose of them for war expenses; to apply the penal code and the agrarian laws of the Rebel Army in the territory where his forces operate; to coordinate operations, plans, administrative and military organizational orders with other revolutionary forces operating in that province, which must be invited to form a sole Army Corps in order to support and unify the Revolution's military effort..."*

Familiar with the history of Cuba and the problems that existed in the restless province of Las Villas during the wars of 1868 and 1895, as well as in the fight of the 1830s, and bearing in mind the divisionist situation that appeared in the Escambray mountains, from the moment of his arrival Che began to work directly with each group without any distinction as to their origin.

From the very beginning he analyzed basically in which direction they wanted to go. He worked to unite the farmers, applied the agrarian laws and in each one of his steps one may observe that he followed the principles and discipline learned during the months



of combat in the Sierra Maestra under the leadership of our Commander-in-Chief.

An evidence of it was the work carried out to unite the combatants and different forces in the mountains and plains of Las Villas, which Che included in the report he sent to the Commander-in-Chief. *"We had to carry out a very intense work in El Escambray in favor of revolutionary unity, since there was a group led by Commander Gutiérrez Menoyo (Second National Front of El Escambray), another one of the Revolutionary Directory (captained by Commanders Faure Chomón and Rolando Cubela), a small one of the Authentic Organization (OA), another one of the People's*

Socialist Party (commanded by Félix Torres) and ourselves: that is, five different organizations acting also with different commands and in only one province. After the painstaking conversations I had with their respective leaders, a series of agreements were reached among the parties and we could integrate an approximately common front".

In October 1958, Che pointed out: *"Upon our arrival to the Sierra de El Escambray, scenario of heroic struggles for the liberty of Cuba, from this general camp of the Revolutionary Directory, we, men of the 26 of July, give testimony of our thankfulness for the fraternal welcome*

granted us by this organization of combatants and express our hope that the long journeys of sacrifice in the plains will be crowned by the supreme success of an integral union among all the groups of combatants of this Cuban region to achieve the extinction of the dictatorship".

In a letter dated November 7, 1958 addressed to Commander Fidel Castro, Che stated:

"...I address you with the purpose of informing you of the latest events that occurred in the heart of this Sierra de El Escambray. The difficulties that arose between us and the organization denominated Second Front of El Escambray gradually came to a crisis after the calling of our top leader Dr. Fidel Castro, until they ended in an open aggression to one of my captains who was stationed in the zone of San Blas. This delicate situation makes it impossible to reach an agreement with the above-mentioned organization. In our last interview I could not make concrete offers due to your open refusal even to talk to members of the Second Front, which contradicted the unifying instructions I brought from the Sierra Maestra. In my opinion, at present the 26 of July Movement cannot speak on a fraternal basis with that institution either, which opens the way for us to hold concrete conversations on all the points of interest for our respective organizations. In official conversations with

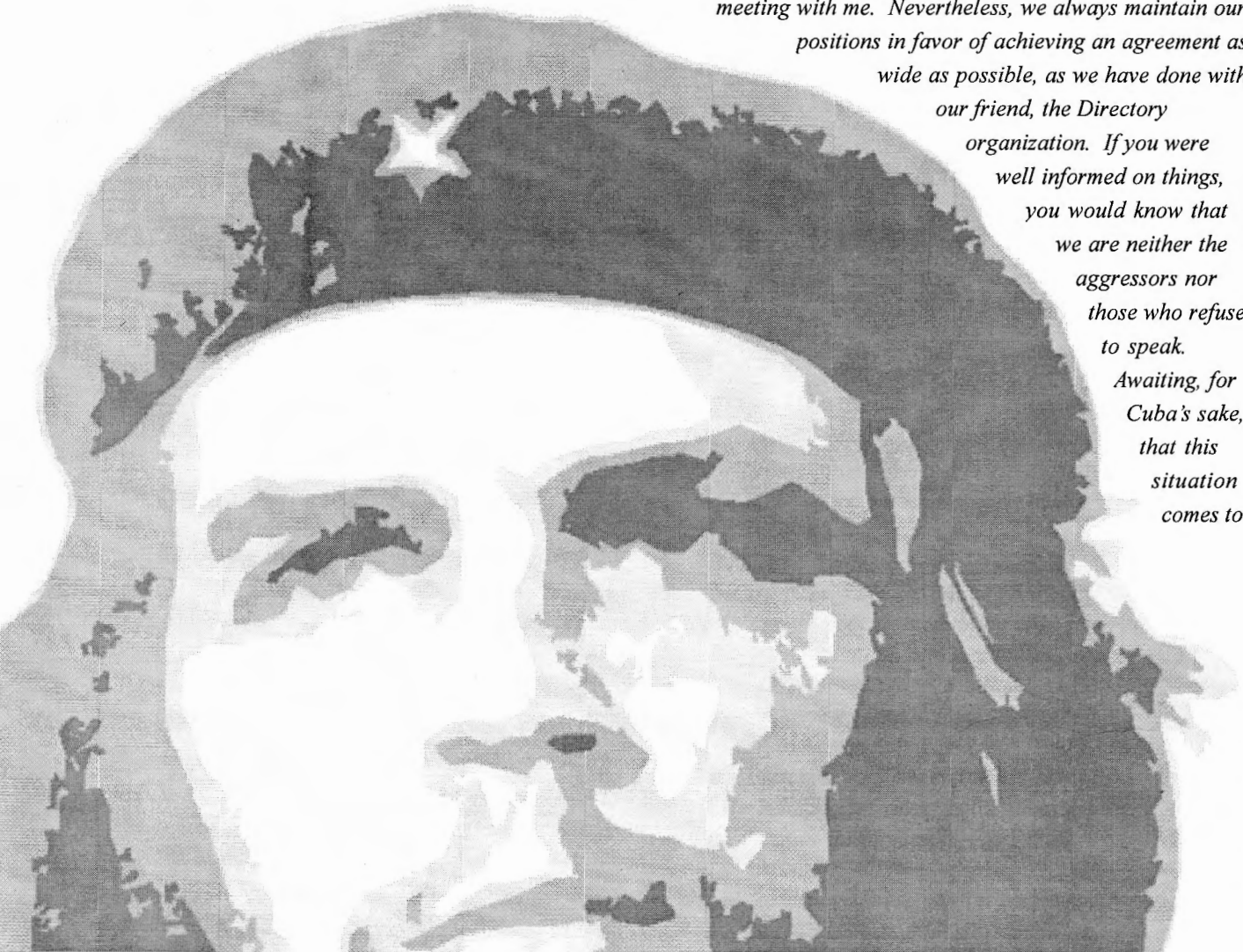
The Keystone of Victory

Víctor Dreke, was the Rebel Army Commander of the ranks in the El Escambray Revolutionary Directory during the liberating war against the Batista dictatorship. He acted as second in command of the Cuban detachment that fought with Che in the Congo, and was leader of the Cubans who were enlisted in the armed struggle in Guinea Bissau to support the PAIGCV, following the internationalist policy of the Cuban Revolution

members of the People's Socialist Party they adopted a frankly unifying position and put their organization in the plains as well as their guerrillas of the Yaguajay front at the service of that unity".

On November 20, 1958, Che once more gave evidence of his attitude in favor of the unity of the revolutionary combatants irrespective of their origin when he sent a letter to Commander Alfredo Peña (a member of the Second Front staff) which read in one of its parts: *"Sir, I regret to have issued orders that to some extent damaged the guerrillas under your command, since you have always stood out as a worthy comrade and we were never targets for the aggressiveness and mistrust that characterized other Second Front commanders. Time will tell you that we had valid reasons to do it; today it would be useless to try to convince you.*

"As regards Gutiérrez Menoyo, you should know that he never answered any letter nor my invitation to have a meeting with me. Nevertheless, we always maintain our positions in favor of achieving an agreement as wide as possible, as we have done with our friend, the Directory organization. If you were well informed on things, you would know that we are neither the aggressors nor those who refuse to speak. Awaiting, for Cuba's sake, that this situation comes to



an end, I take leave from you, affectionately, Che”.

After the triumph of the Revolution on January 1, 1959 he continued to be a champion of revolutionary unity, raising his voice and his action in every event and every tribune inside and outside the country. In his speech at the University of Las Villas on December 28, 1959, when he was awarded the Honoris Causa degree by the Faculty of Pedagogics, he expressed that he only accepted the title as

fighting against colonialism. In all those meetings he stressed the need of unity against imperialism, colonization and neo-colonialism.

In the first half of April 1965 he held a meeting in Dar es Salaam with some of the main leaders of Congo’s Liberation Movement, in which he explained to them the urgent need of uniting all the groups that were taking part in the struggle, following the ideas of Patrick Lumumba.



From left to right, Fidel, Víctor Dreke, Che and José María Martínez Tamayo (Papi). Che is disguised to depart for the Congo.

a general tribute to the people’s army, that he could not accept it as an individual because all the pedagogy he had practiced had been the one of guerrilla camps. He said that the University’s essential function was to paint itself black, to paint itself mulatto, not only with reference to the students, but also to the professors; to paint itself workers and peasants and to paint itself people, because the university is nobody’s patrimony and belongs to the people of Cuba.

Today, he would feel great revolutionary satisfaction to see that 43 years after these words all these basic ideas and principles have been more than fulfilled by the Revolution and our people has become a whole University for us and for the world.

In 1965, Che toured several countries of Africa where he met with the leaders of the different African national liberation movements that in one way or another were

In his first contacts after his arrival in Congo Leopoldville, he extended that call not only among the different Congolese groups but also to the Rwandan and Cubans who were there fighting, to form a single army that would lead to the development of the fight for independence and to the victory, taking experience from the achievements of the fight for liberation in Cuba.

In his message to the Three Continents’ Conference he mentioned in one of the paragraphs: *“And if we all were capable of uniting so that our blows were more solid and accurate, so that all kinds of aid to the countries in struggle were even more effective, how great and how near would the future be!”*

In Bolivia he also defended the revolutionary unity, which shows in the participation not only of Bolivian combatants but also Cubans and those from other countries of the American continent.

Che was a forerunner of the unity of man in the different fronts, be it political, ideological or military. Let us recall that our Commander-in-Chief stated that the strength of our Revolution lies precisely in the unity of the people■



Interpreting



TATU

Thirty-seven years ago, I met a white man with a piercing gaze that demanded respect. He was introduced to the Congolese as Tatu, which in Swahili means Number Three. I had heard this name before when Mitudidi Leonard, our staff leader, spoke with the commander of the base at Luluabourg. Mitudidi suggested to the commander that he take care of Tatu, because he was ill. But when he noticed that I had heard the mysterious name, he threatened to shoot me if I didn't keep the secret. In three days, Mitudidi assigned me to be the teacher and interpreter for the famous Tatu, and the news exploded like a time bomb in my head. After Mitudidi's warning, even when somebody else would commit the indiscretion of mentioning the name Tatu, I would feel dread.

When I first met Tatu, I wanted nothing to do with him, because he had the face of a conceited, mocking white man. With only three years and ten months of independence in the Congo, white people were still considered to be

**Doctor Freddy E. Ilunga
I. Yatii,**
Che's Swahili interpreter

Tatu's sacrifice showed me how to see the world as beautiful, and that we only have to struggle to humanize its tenants against egoism. His method of teaching through example is a beacon that lights the way. In the search south of the Sahara for justice and the formation of the New Human, his courageous life left us with the lesson that we could create an alternative development model, one that would assuredly form the New Human of the 21st century in Africa

superior to black people, due to the brutal and inhumane colonization during almost 80 years. They were the enemy for their acts of cruelty against the defenseless population during the war. Now, furthermore, the identity of this white man could cost me my life.

I soon noticed differences between Tatu and his compatriots; he intensely dedicated himself to reading and didn't participate in the jokes that the others usually made during their free time. Despite the Cuban and Congolese language barrier, the others seemed happy and chatted among themselves, while the doctor-interpreter sought refuge in his books, smoking tobacco.

Moja (which means Number One in Swahili) already had introduced himself to us as the leader of the Cubans, but sometimes he would disappear from the camp and upon his return, despite our language barrier, I could tell that he would report to Tatu. Then who was the leader? Since when did a black man give orders to a white man? Only a fool would believe the story that in Tatu's country

He intensely dedicated himself to reading and didn't participate in the jokes that the others usually made during their free time. Despite the Cuban and Congolese language barrier, the others seemed happy and chatted among themselves, while the doctor-interpreter sought refuge in his books, smoking tobacco

blacks and whites were equal. How was it possible that an interpreter didn't go along with his boss, because I always stuck close to Tatu. If we take this logically, the procession should be made up of Tatu, as the French and Spanish interpreter; I, as the interpreter's interpreter; and our boss, Moja.

Today it is difficult to explain how my first impression changed as I began to grow closer to Tatu, without any changes in his behavior towards me.

Without a doubt, with his pedagogy of teaching through example, ideas were unconsciously instilled in me that I ended up thinking were my own. He helped me to forget the geographic accident of where I had boarded the train of life, as well as my ethnic and national egoism. He showed me my relationship to the misnamed Earth, if we realize that

the name **Water** is more appropriate because there is more water here than earth.

Tatu's lessons were the educative messages of a father to his child, so much so that presently, when I am facing difficulties, they are a reference book that helps me to break down the restrictive barriers that impose themselves on me. Using his lessons, I can feel like a free man in a free world.

My Ideas Inspired by Tatu

"We" is a term that I have used to direct my life; but today I will return to the word, "I", to take responsibility for these reflections.

People, when not sure of their convictions, always make a qualification in their approach: "as so-and-so says" and cite a dear and respected leader or



TATU

hero. If the idea is wrong, they are already saved from responsibility. But when somebody is impressed, the idea becomes their own. It is as if each time a mathematician uses an equation, he cites its discoverer, although the observers take it as the mathematician's own discovery. In this way, I used the ideas of Tatu.

Due to our survival instinct, human beings are egoistic by nature, but this instinct should have limits. When egoism exceeds the limits, it threatens to monopolize the human species. To overcome this calamity we will need many years of light and to erase the places where we were born from our subconscious, because the space that we occupy in the galaxy is comparable to a mere molecule on the earth. Therefore, we are nationals of the world. This means that the world in which we live belongs to us, and we have the right to defend it for the common good, from everything that disturbs the peace of its inhabitants: hunger, sickness, misery, injustice, and everything that brings about inequality. We should be able to fulfill our duties and to have rights as citizens of the world, without any consideration of differences in skin color, sex, and religion. We can defend humanity in any part of the planet without feeling that we are foreigners in any part of the universe.

The recognition of the protagonist role of people, with their new power to transform a growing society, is the humanist version of historical materialism. Objective economic laws

do not transform societies; only the conscious and organized actions of people and the New Human are capable of change. Oppression is a factor that is identified with the economic system; consequently, changes in society must be essentially ethical and must come from the people.

Ideas, ethical and political values, and emotions are solid alternatives to biological factors. When love for the oppressed becomes more concrete and committed, it ends in the identification with all of the world's oppressed.

When we consider the New Human, we see that a true humanist is guided by great emotions; it is impossible to think of a genuine human being without this quality. The vanguard should recognize the importance of this when teaching about just causes. To educate in matters of liberty is essential for the New Human, for education is a concrete way to create possibilities; it is the weapon for the triumph of liberation. The road to liberty is a conscious process, generated by the new individuals, a new people, a new human, and a new society. Liberty is impossible to achieve while people maintain a egoistic, competitive, or servile mentality.

Still, within socialism, the struggle continues against the trend to blindly follow others, against authoritarianism, bureaucracy, servility, economic problems, and all other factors that detour us from realizing a society that is for and by the people.

In an ethical and political sense, it is not the men and the women or the people as they are that are capable of changing history, but instead the new men, women, and people; the objective of the violent revolution is nothing without the support of the people. The invincibility of the guerrilla is the invincibility of the people. The optimistic revolutionary rests in the certainty that it is possible to change the egoistic nature of humans with tireless efforts to enhance their capacities through education.

What is the New Human, but only the person who enjoys liberty in all senses of the word, who is not tied to a group or a society, who respects human laws and a society acquired by consensus, who doesn't blindly follow others. The New Human is someone who, after making a mistake, is prepared to think it through again and to admit it without embarrassment, and who owns up to faults without trying to hide them

Tatu's sacrifice showed me how to see the world as beautiful, and that we only have to struggle to humanize its tenants against egoism. His method of teaching through examples is a beacon that lights the way. In the search south of the Sahara for justice and the formation of the New Human, his courageous life left us with the lesson that we could create an alternative development model, one that would assuredly form the New Human of the 21st century in Africa:

- a person who participates more in politics
- a person who shows more solidarity in the social realm
- a person who is more economically productive
- a person who is more universal in his relations with the world

To arrive at these objectives, we have to use his example as our weapon

towards a certain victory. His great lesson is to struggle and to educate people against egoism. (Egoism is the excessive love that people have for themselves that makes them act out of self-interest, without caring about others.)

That master-teacher who taught us with his actions, despite not physically being with us today, still returns each time I remember his lessons, and break down my own egoism in the name of the conservation of the species. This egoism spreads from an individual to a group of people, until it grows into the ethnic egoism of an entire nation. In time, it brings together different nations that have egoistically accumulated wealth. These nations monopolize technological means, subjugating other nations with their empire of property and possessions that should be the birthright of humanity, but instead are

in the hands of this millennium's global imperialism.

Currently, the egoistic progress of a few nations have converted humans into slaves of the modern era where the club is replaced by hunger, misery, and sickness. This slavery that they impose upon us has allowed me to better appreciate the sacrifice of that master-teacher named Tatu and of his column of the sons of Martí that accompanied him to the Congo to fight against injustice. My stroke of luck and the honor of being at his side, the possibility to transmit today the messages that he left me with his special pedagogical technique, gives me strength to fight for the good of humanity and to iron out the class and national differences that are fundamental in egoism.

If it is true that we live within a broader sense of the word humanity, that we are the heritage of humanity and it is our home, then for our transitive nature, all the recourses of the world are our birthright. This truth is the teaching of Tatu, the man that immortalized José Martí's idea that "Homeland is humanity", an idea apparently so unattainable these days. Tatu understood Martí with the example that he left us. *"He boarded the train of life, erasing the first station from his mind, and understood that each stop of the train was the beginning of the trip"*.

In his first days in the Congo, Tatu had to fight against his own beliefs; he was gravely embarrassed by his skin color, and because his train stopped in the first platform, this was something that he could only resolve near the end of his participation in that war. He freed himself from those restrictions of rhetorical nationalism and skin color, and understood the importance of educating the Congolese people in the places that lacked military formation, because although he had good soldiers around him, they needed more training.

Under the direction of the Congo Liberation Movement, inside the total organizational chaos, he got over his feelings of being a white foreigner. He



didn't limit himself to observe the panorama of the inherited sectarianism, because he knew that the constitution of a nation requires many years. One day, in defiance, he marched without authorization to the front lines of combat, which was forbidden to him out of concern for his physical wellbeing. Already then he was a Congolese Tatu, and his following actions were of a citizen of the world that no longer knew where he had boarded the train. In between setbacks and among the tribulations of many negative factors, he reassessed his conception of the struggle and knew that he had made the right decision, albeit late.

What Tatu represented and will represent to me, despite the short time at his side, is in the messages of his actions:

1. We must have faith in people as protagonists of history.

2. Education is the weapon of victory against human egoism, for the new world and the New Human.

3. We must liberate ourselves from our instinctive bonds and must dominate the natural forces of hunger and sickness that affect our own organisms.

4. Our lives are in our hands, according to the values of education and culture that we construct for our society, with all the difficulties and limitations therein which we can overcome.

5. To live in liberty, we must be ready to overcome our fear of the future and to recognize it as our responsibility. As an objective condition of personal liberty, we must be more creative in building a tolerant and diverse society.

6. We need to feel solidarity with others. Through the means in which we liberate ourselves from imposed restrictions and our own limitations, we will be more capable to accept others and to create bonds of mature friendship.

7. The most difficult struggle is for the liberty to love in all senses of the word.

8. Freedom requires an ethical responsibility to respect the dignity, liberty, and the interests of others.



9. If we do not recognize the importance of others, we will never have a definitive conquest. We will always have new demands in maintaining liberty, that in each historical circumstance will acquire a new shade. (For example, a liberated country could be threatened by other countries; in other instances, the threat could come from a social, cultural, religious, or ethnic group).

10. We can't reduce liberty to legality; human value must be acknowledged. In this way we can contribute to the effort of making liberty more human.

11. The possibility of success has historically been the key to optimism, and we will succeed with incessant human effort.

12. The struggle should be waged against the external or internal oppressor, against the misery provoked by freak accidents and against war, whose consequences the privileged classes direct so that the brunt falls on the exploited.

13. The fundamental change required of humanity for the liberty of man and woman, is through the

education of eliminating both egoism and the historical trend of blindly following others and deifying them.

14. To not to fall into dogmatic extremes, we must have a great dose of humanity, in the sense of justice and truth. This feeling of love for the universal finds its criteria of authenticity in personal love and our sacrifices remain compensated by our love for humanity.

What is the New Human, but only the person who enjoys liberty in all senses of the word, who is not tied to a group or a society, who respects human laws and a society acquired by consensus, who doesn't blindly follow others. The New Human is someone who, after making a mistake, is prepared to think it through again and to admit it without embarrassment, and who owns up to faults without trying to hide them. The New Human maintains honest and open relationships, and expects the same from others. Fundamentally, in a conscious and dynamic manner consistent with these ideas, we are in the path of the New Human, in search of a new country and a new world■

The Photos of the Photo

Arleen Rodríguez Derivet

In March 2002, Che returned to the corner of 23rd and 12th Streets, to the same place where, 42 years before, Alberto Korda had captured his soul through the scratched lens of his old Leica camera. After the physical death of the Guerrilla, the image was bestowed upon the rebellious world of the 1960's. Korda's friend and student, José A. Figueroa, brings the image, multiplied various times, back to the place of its birth.

For fifteen days, the Carlos Enriquez Gallery of the doubly historical corner¹ housed the unique exposition: seventeen different versions of the infinite number of ways in which the most universal photo of all times has been depicted. Figueroa worked on it more times than that in both his teacher's and his own darkroom.

"I was Korda's apprentice and assistant since 1964, and although at times we took different paths, in the 80's and until his death, we worked together and travelled the world. Wherever we went we saw his photo of Che. In a gondola in Venice we even got a free ride when the gondolier found out that it was Korda who had taken the photo. After years of unconsciously taking in endless reproductions in so many different contexts, one day at the beginning of this year, I realized that I had to do something."

A tribute to your teacher or to Che?

"Neither of those two needed it. What I wanted to do was to make people think about the use, the misuse and the abuse of the image, that is expressed everyday in the commercialization of objects and ideas that that are very far from Che's ethics. In these past few

years, the last straw was the use of the image on a vodka label."²

Many could feel drawn to the force of the image and still not go there. But it is important to always have the common sense to choose an object that at least can be identified with what Che stood for.

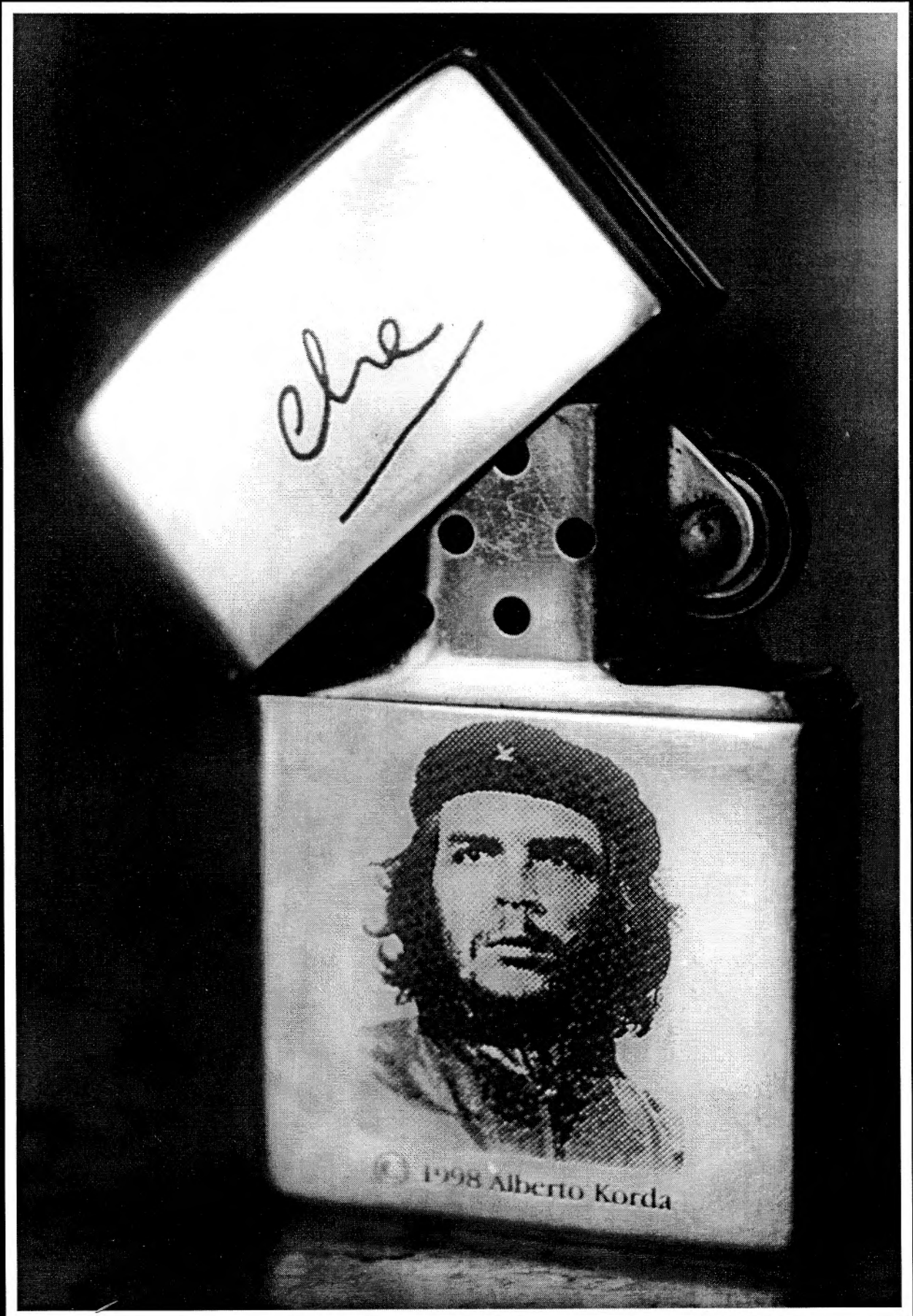
"During my time with Korda, he taught me that the image can be spread without any knowledge of the ideal behind it. This does not always happen, but without a doubt, it can..."

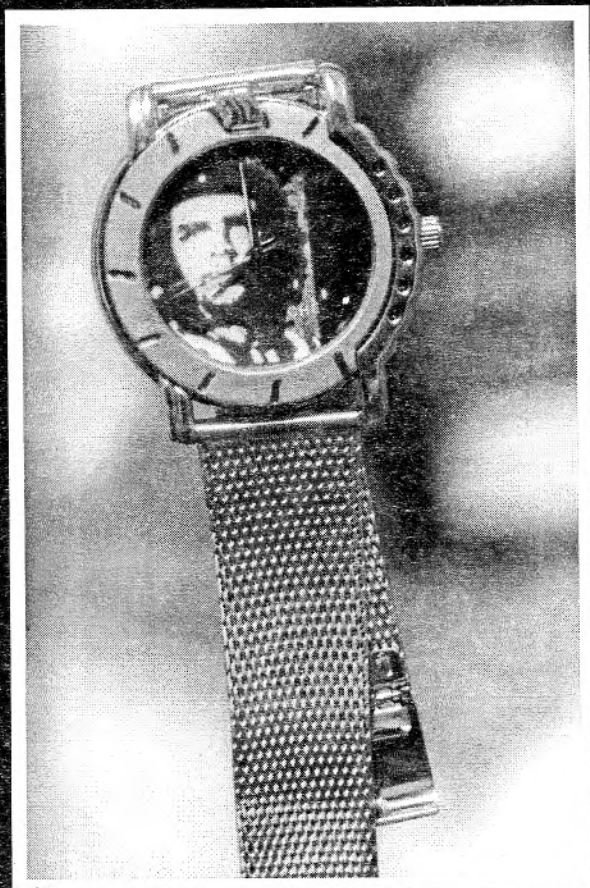
And what did the exposition say in this sense?

"It really went beyond my expectations. The things that were said or written in the guestbook of the exposition told me that people want to do more than just passively look. I also couldn't stop thinking about its location and the significance that the corner has, not only politically or historically, but also as meeting point for the bustling crowds of the city. Between 80 and 100 people came through the gallery every day, and the majority said or wrote something."

Why is there a lighter on the cover of the brochure?

"That is what I like the most, although it also bothers me. It is a photo of a limited edition set of 100 Zippo lighters, that came in a little box with a music CD dedicated to Che. Someone had given it to Korda, and he passed it on to me. Thank goodness that I had already taken a photo of the lighters because on September 16, 2001, on my return trip, the box was taken from me in the New York airport, not because of the image of Che, but because it contained





lighters. I had just gone to see the Twin Towers, and when I tried to claim it at the airline, they told me that it had been destroyed. Who knows, maybe I will find it again one day, because someone who knows, would realize that it was a collection piece."

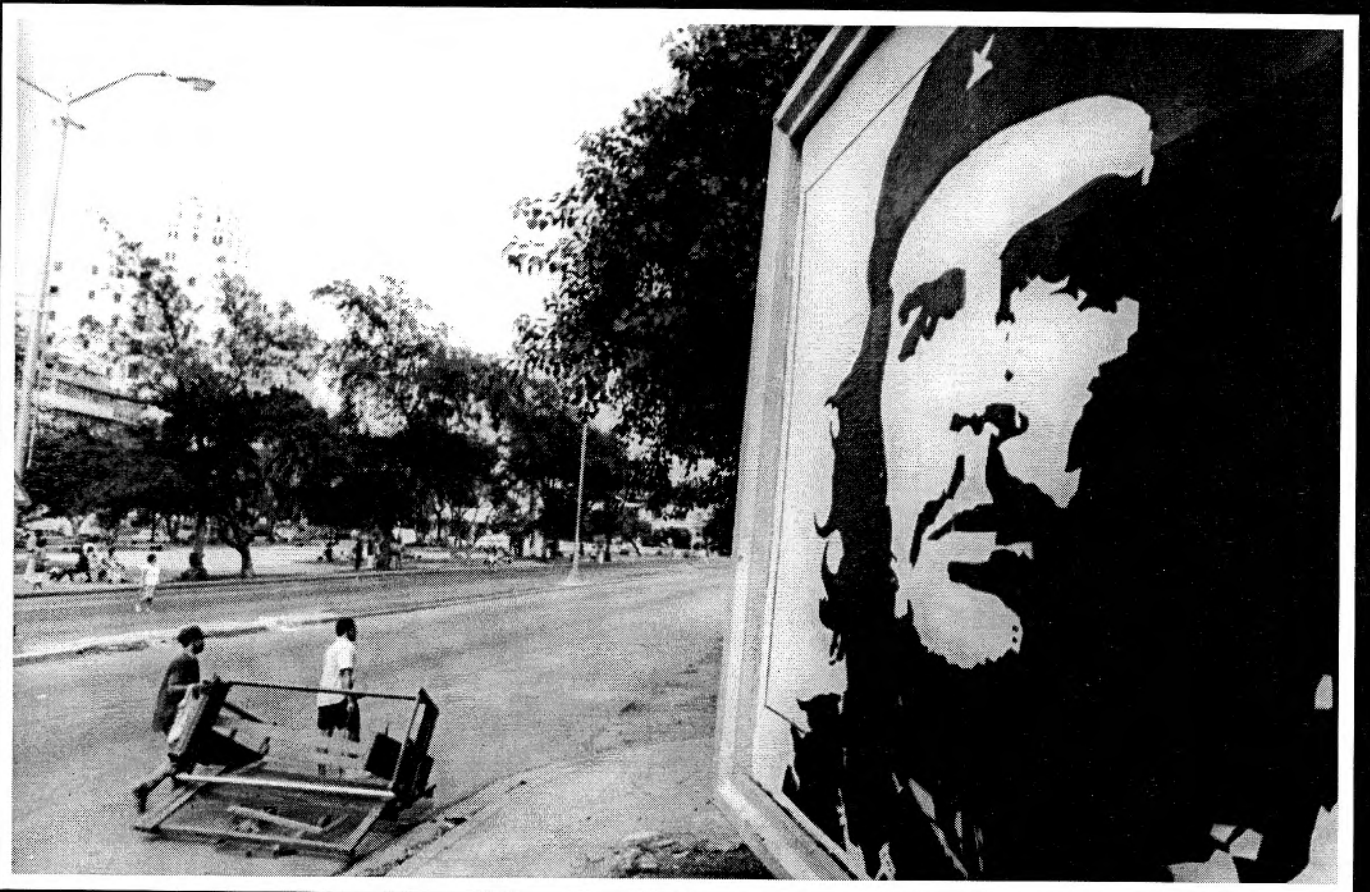
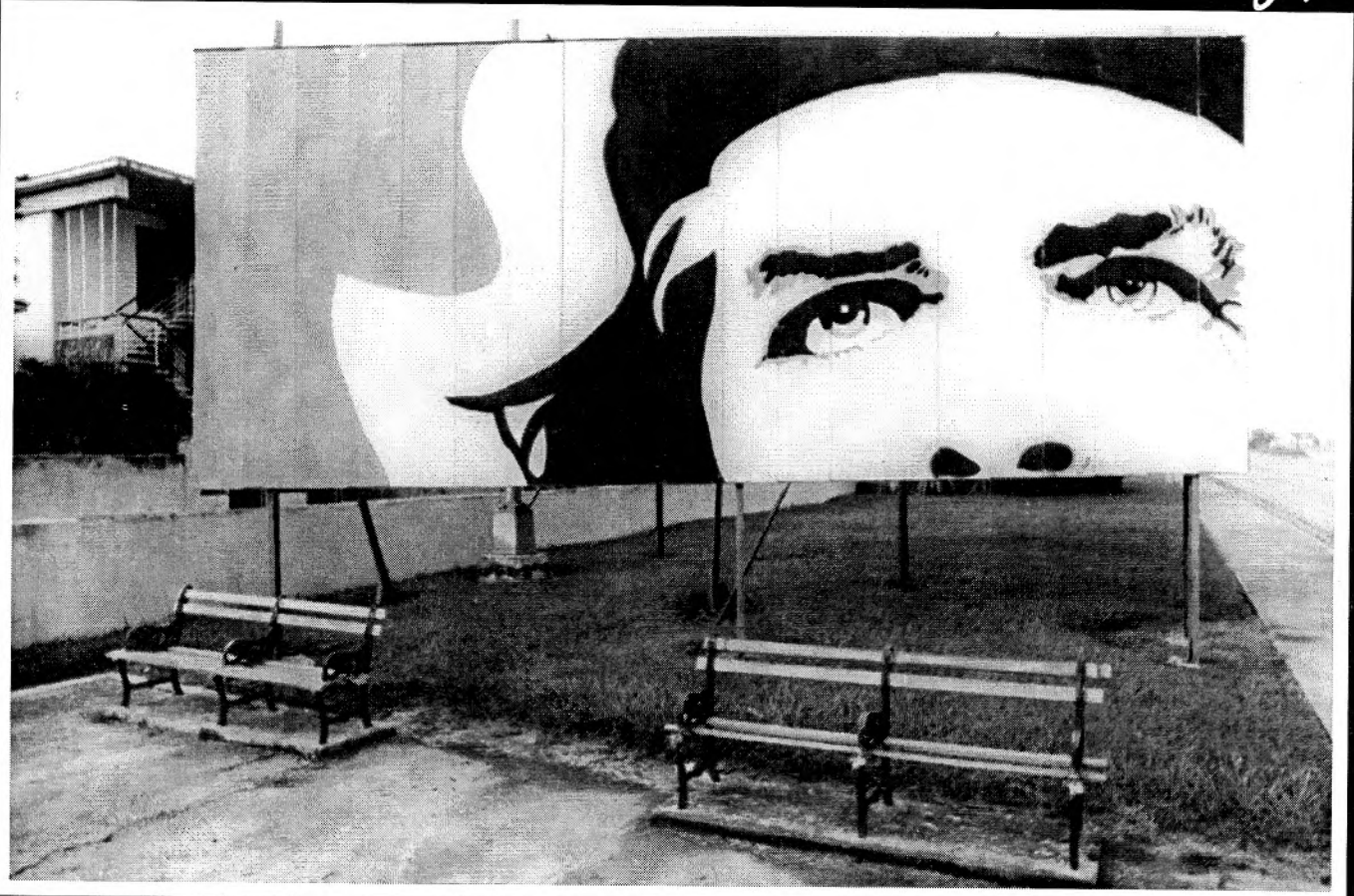
You like it and yet it bothers you. How is this possible?

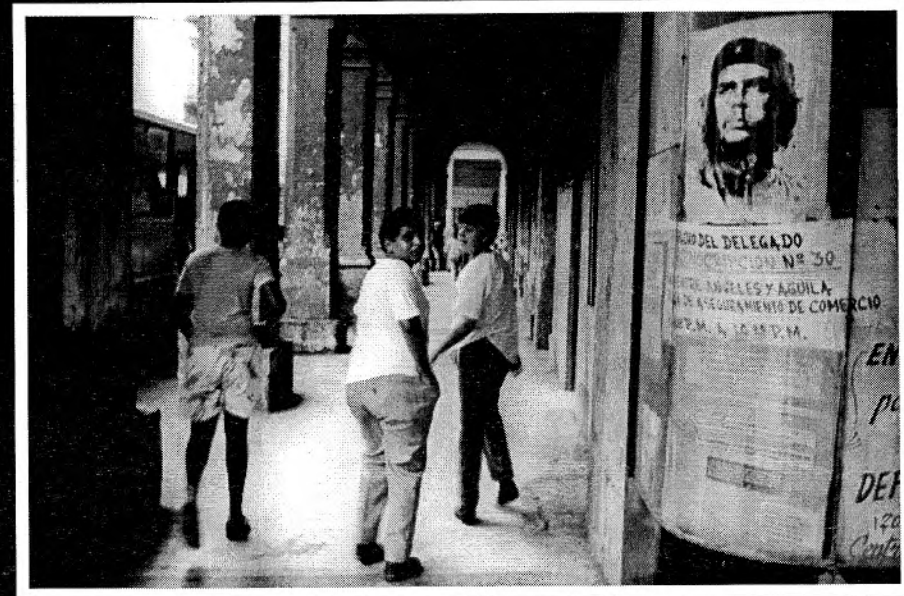
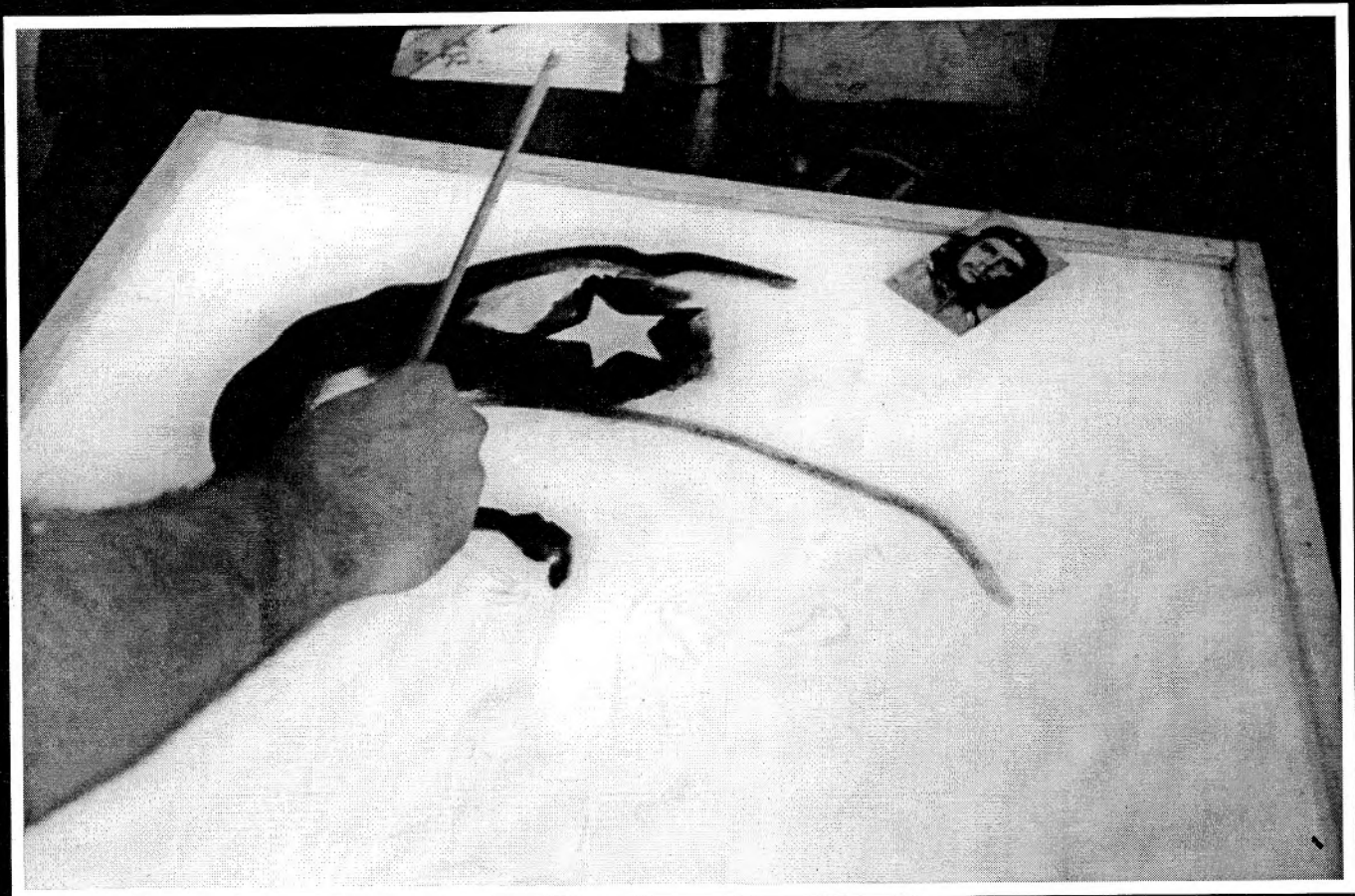
"It is the union of two symbols completely adverse to each other: the Zippo lighters of capitalism and Che of anti-capitalism. They are the lighters used by the powerful, the mafia and the Yankee military in Vietnam. However, the strength of the image of Che surpasses all of this."

It must be because, at least for me, who knew nothing of Zippo, what I get from it is the rebel symbol, that goes on to ignite consciousness...

"What bothers me and what was my motive in having the exposition is always the commercialization that has nothing to do with Che."

But in your teenage years, wouldn't you have liked to have something like a T-shirt with that image?





“That image didn’t exist in my time. Remember that in March of 1960, Korda handed it in to the newspaper along with a group of other photos, and it wasn’t chosen. After this, they published it once with a little announcement about a conference on Che, and then I didn’t see it again until the day of the public

gathering for Che’s death. I still remember the day when I arrived together with Korda at the Plaza and we saw it, gigantic, presiding over the gathering from the facade of the building that now houses the MININT. Even the photographer himself was impressed. Celia Sánchez³ had chosen

it to be used between the hundreds that the newspaper had brought to her.

“Afterwards came the million copies that Feltrinelli made for European demonstrations of May 1968. That is what definitively popularized it. The commercialization came afterwards. But for me it continued to be something sacred. I prefer the thrill of the night of the public gathering.”

¹The corner of 23rd and 12th Streets was where the Socialist character of the Cuban Revolution was declared on April 15, 1961, during the funeral of the victims of the attacks on Cuban airports as a prelude to the Bay of Pigs invasion. At the same place one year before, on March 5, 1960, during the farewell ceremony for the victims of the imperialist sabotage against the French boat *La Coubre*, the most universal photo of Che Guevara was taken, and Fidel Castro called out “Patria o Muerte” (“Homeland or Death”) for the first time, the watchword that all Cubans have made their own.

²Korda sued the Smirnof firm and donated the funds to children with cancer in Cuba.

³Secretary of the State Council and Fidel Castro’s principle collaborator in the Sierra Maestra until her premature death in Havana in January 1980 ■



When, in 1949 in his home municipality of San Antonio de los Baños, in Havana, Cuba, José Ramón de Lázaro Bencomo began at age eleven to sculpt in plaster, he never imagined that in time he would become José Delarra, the artist whose small, medium, and giant sculptures have been presented in more than 40 countries. His paintings and drawings have also been widely appreciated.

Now, thirty-five years after the cowardly murder of Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia, we hold, more than an interview, a conversation, with

Who were the main participants in this monumental construction?

The Eliseo Díaz Machado Foundry in the capital of the Guanabacoa municipality made the casting of the sculpture. The construction companies of Santa Clara worked as much in the construction of the monument as they did in the Plaza. The architect Blanca Hernández worked with me, building my ideas into reality, and the architect Alberto Cao of Santa Clara designed the meeting area in the Plaza. They both designed the Memorial with my authorization. In the construction of the

Permanent

Ulises Estrada Lescaille

Thirty-five years after the cowardly murder of Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia, we hold, more than an interview, a conversation, with Delarra about his monumental work that was constructed in Santa Clara to perpetuate the memory of the Heroic Guerrilla and his comrades

Delarra about his monumental work that was constructed in Santa Clara to perpetuate the memory of the Heroic Guerrilla and his comrades.

P: How did you come up with the idea for the Sculptural Complex?

Delarra: Twenty years have passed since we started to construct the Sculptural Complex, and we really no longer speak in terms of the original idea. Commandant of the Revolution Juan Almeida Bosque put me in charge of working on a project that would pay homage to Che and his comrades that fought in Bolivia and would perpetuate their memory.

Commandant Almeida's idea also had the support of Commandant of the Revolution Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, who was second in command of the Column 8 that Che led in the fight against Batista's dictatorship. Commandants Rogelio Acevedo and Víctor Bordón additionally took a great weight of the construction upon their shoulders. The majority of the Column 8 members who were alive at that time worked voluntarily every week.

complete monumental work, more than 500,000 people from Villa Clara who were selected by merit, volunteered their labor without receiving a penny.

When did you begin to construct the project?

We began to work on this project in 1982, and it was inaugurated on December 28, 1988 with the Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, General of the Army, Raúl Castro, in attendance. This was the anniversary of the date that Santa Clara was taken thirty years earlier.

Let's talk a little about the ideas behind the Complex.

I'll try to describe the different projects that were made for the Monumental Complex to Che and to the comrades that fought with him in Bolivia.

The monument to Che is orientated 190 degrees, that is to say if we drew a line directly through the globe, his figure would be heading directly towards South America.

This project isn't only dedicated to the Santa Clara battle; it also contains many different aspects of Che's life. For

example, there are passages written about his time in Guatemala and with the United Nations. The farewell letter that he left for Fidel has more than 2,000 letters and is inscribed on a six meter column.

On the top, is a bronze figure of Che that is 6 meters and 80 centimeters high, wearing the loose clothing of the guerrilla, with his gun in hand, and with his asthma inhaler visible in his pocket. He doesn't carry his gun ready or aimed, because he is presented as a guerrilla that continues onward even with a cast on the arm that he had fractured a few days before. I depicted it out of the sling not

working voluntarily with a phrase referring to the same. Another describes youth as the "fundamental clay in our work". There also are literacy tutors, children in schools, and pioneers with the symbolic salute, "We will be like Che".

The walls, the farewell letter, and the base for Che's figure, are very pure geometrical elements. You know that the cube, as the rectangle, is a very strong geometric form and is on a plane of 72 meters that also is another rectangle. This represents the

Tribute

only for the historical fact, but also because not using the sling formed a part of his personality, a man rebelling even against himself. At the base of this is his phrase, "Hasta la Victoria Siempre" (Forever Onwards Towards Victory).

Furthermore, there is a decorative wall that measures 6 meters high by 18 meters long which depicts Che in the Sierra Maestra receiving instructions from Fidel; then with Celia Sánchez Manduley; with the Commandant Camilo Cienfuegos; then in the mountains on horseback followed by the group of combatants that invaded from east to west with him. The majority of them that appear here are comrades that heroically died later in Bolivia fighting at Che's side. Also reflected in this strip is the meeting to unite the revolutionary forces that was held in El Pedrero; the assault of the armored train which was the decisive action in the capture of the city of Santa Clara; and finally, the figure of Che, after his victory in this military operation that was so important.

There is a another area where Che is depicted as the Minister of Industry

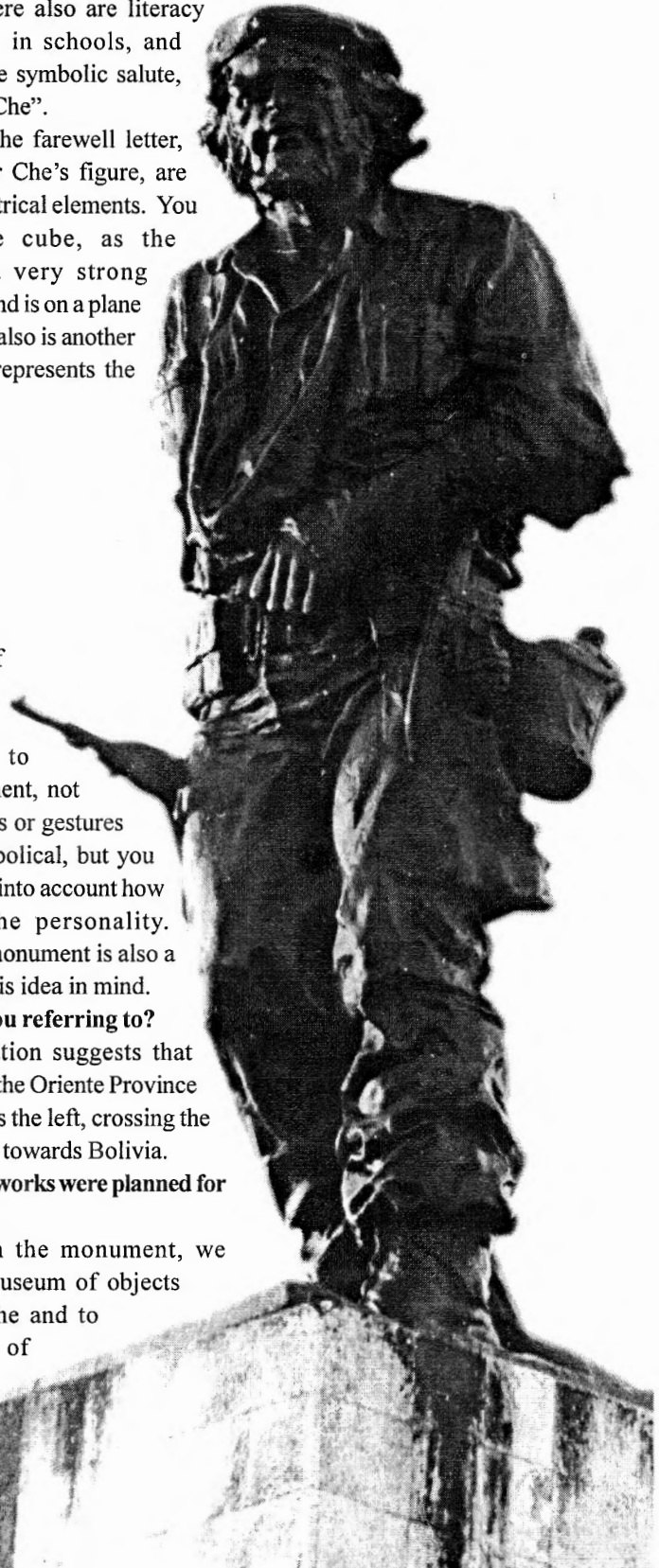
personality of Che, a man very steady, very strong. That is to say, in a monument, not only are the faces or gestures of the hero symbolical, but you have to also take into account how to represent the personality. Therefore, this monument is also a sculpture with this idea in mind.

What are you referring to?

The orientation suggests that Che comes from the Oriente Province and turns towards the left, crossing the Escambray to go towards Bolivia.

What other works were planned for the Complex?

Underneath the monument, we constructed a museum of objects belonging to Che and to other members of the Column 8, a small



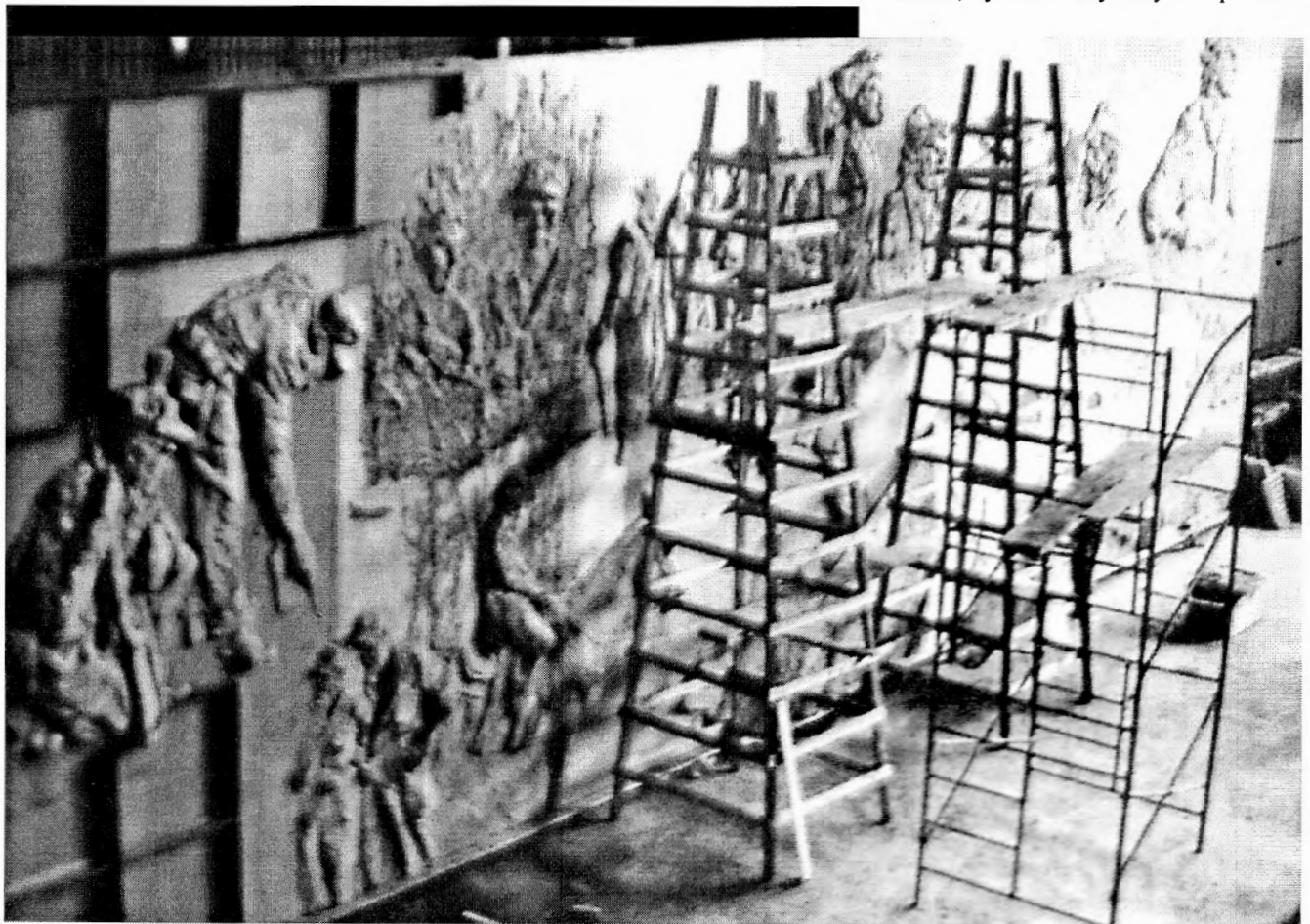


José Delarra, whose sculptures have been in more than 40 countries, tells *Tricontinental* about his experiences.

area for documentation, and a formal Meeting Hall.

That was the original idea, but what happened when the remains of Che and the first guerrilla comrades were found?

When the remains of Che and some of the other comrades were found in 1997, and later on, when the remains appeared of almost all of the 38 that fell, Alberto Cao, the architect of what I had called the Memorial, wanted to change its name to Mausoleum. I opposed this word because it is derived from the funeral monument of King *Mausolus* in Alicarnaso that was of gold, marble, and other wealthy materials, and Che never would have wanted to be in a Mausoleum. So, we stayed with the name Memorial and it remained very moderate. I modeled the faces of the 38 companions that fell in Bolivia, and although not all of them have been found, symbolically they are present.



The other recovered remains are from a group of guerrillas made up of different nationalities: Bolivians, Peruvians, Cubans, and Argentinians, as well as Tania, whom we consider to be Cuban.

We are also missing the remains of the two Bolivians, Inti Peredo and David Adriaola, who died afterwards in 1969. The former's remains are at rest in his country, and the latter's are still to be found. At any rate, there are niches for all of them in the Memorial.

This part had not been planned before the appearance of the remains of Che and his companions. How could you construct it in only a few months?

Luckily, we had the area of the Meeting Hall, a part of which we used to construct the Memorial. What made it easy to do in a few months was that everything was already constructed, and we only had to do the niches and fix the ceiling and floor, which were not difficult to do.

Why was it constructed in Santa Clara and not in another territory of the country where Che fought?

It was in Santa Clara where he waged his best and most decisive battle. This is why the Monumental Complex became the universal center in memory of Che, and at the same time, in memory of the deeds of the Column 8 in the Santa Clara province.

The first monument that I made was in Güinia de Miranda, the first town taken by Che. I did others in Báez, Remedios, Zulueta, and Caibarién. In Santa Clara we did a memorial of the derailment of the armored train, and the capture of the small hill of El Capiro, from where Batista's army dominated the entire city with 50 caliber machine guns. El Capiro stands today as a natural viewpoint from where you can appreciate all of the city's urban development after the triumph of the Revolution. We did another in Carmen Park to honor the place where the captain of Column 8's Suicide Troop, Roberto



Rodríguez, otherwise known as El Vaquerito (Little Cowboy), fell in combat.

Also, we did another monument for Squadron 31's capture, because they resisted the most and could only be captured by the rebel troops on January 1, 1959. Another is in Santo Domingo, where Che sent Víctor Bordón to impede enemy troops from advancing towards Santa Clara. There are also monuments in Manicaragua, in the factory that bears the name of the Heroic Guerrilla in La Campana, and in the place from where Che commanded during the Santa Clara battles that today is the home of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Each one of these was inaugurated by combatants of the Rebel Army on the dates that coincided with the deeds they represent.

Taken together, these monuments to Che and to his comrades are approximately 100 kilometers wide, a



system that spans almost the entire province.

We bid farewell to Delarra, with the security that this work will contribute to

keep the immortal image and example of Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara alive for future generations of Cubans and revolutionaries throughout the world ■



On October 17, 1997, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, chairman of the State Council and of the Council of Ministers, presided over a solemn ceremony held at the Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara Monumental Complex Memorial to bury the remains of Commandant Che Guevara and Cuban comrades Alberto Fernández Montes de Oca, Carlos Coello, René Martínez Tamayo, Orlando Pantoja, as well as the Bolivian Simeón Cuba and the Peruvian Juan Pablo Chang.

Before the families of these heroes, veterans from the struggle in Cuba, survivors of the Bolivian War and thousands of people from Villa Clara, Fidel spoke:

"We didn't come to say goodbye to Che and his heroic comrades. We came to receive them.

"I see Che and his men as a reinforcement troop, as a military detachment of invincible combatants, that this time included not only Cubans, but also the Latin Americans that came to fight by our side and to write new pages of history and glory...the invasion from the Sierra Maestra over immense and unprotected ground and the capture of the city of Santa Clara with only a few men, along with their other actions, are a testimony to the heroic feats of which they were capable. Their ideas about revolutions in their homelands and in the rest of South America were feasible, despite the enormous obstacles. If they could have realized their plans, perhaps today the world would be different".

The visit to the Memorial

There is Life Here

Ariel Zapata

*To honor, honor
José Martí*

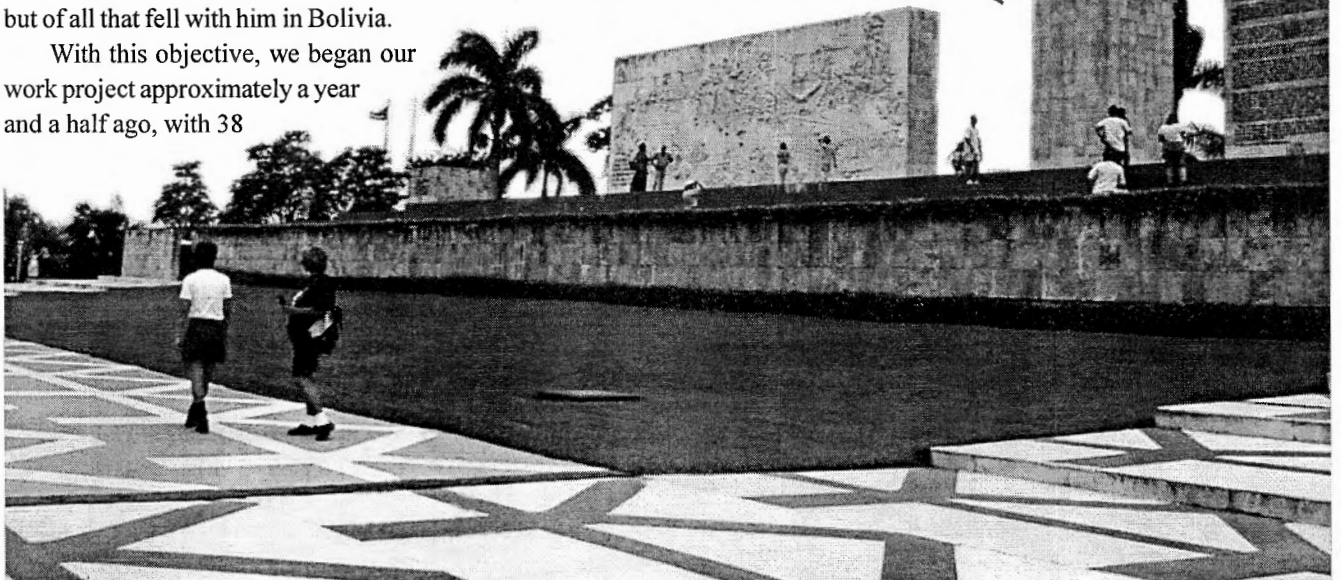
For the fifth time, we visit the Sculptural Complex of Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara in the city of Santa Clara, in the center of Cuba. This time we speak with the director, Comrade Mercedes Piñon, about the work of teaching the Pioneers and young Cuban people about the exemplary life of Che and his combatants in Bolivia. Mercedes answers our questions and explains to us:

We are making a very special effort to ensure that the Memorial really does conserve the memory, not only of Che, but of all that fell with him in Bolivia.

With this objective, we began our work project approximately a year and a half ago, with 38

schools in Santa Clara. They all study the guerrillas, but each specializes in one of them, and in Che, of course.

Primary and secondary schools, high schools, and some technical colleges are included in the programs. On the anniversary of the fall in combat or the birth of each one of these guerrillas, the children, adolescents, and teenagers come and put a flower on the remains and that day we dedicate to that guerrilla, as much in the school as here. It is a form of paying homage, not only as a general tribute, but also serving to



perpetuate that person in the memory of each one of us. Soon a new school will be inaugurated close to here, that will be named Octavio de la Concepción y de la Pedraja after one of the guerrillas who was born here in Santa Clara. We proposed this idea to his mother, and she accepted it.

This is a project that we develop more every month during the school year. We also work to educate the teachers and librarians about these heroes' lives and the heroic deeds in which they participated. When we

We want the children to be able to identify themselves with him, with the things about Che that children can relate to. In this way, they could be like him, because he was a person who, just like them, had problems, mistakes, defects, and virtues

We prepare the students to view this as their expertise. In case a question comes up for which they don't have an answer, a professional guide is always by their side. This method attracts more young people than if we or their teachers explain things to them.

We don't want the students to just stroll through the museum and the Memorial. We have to know how to reach them in our explanations so that they feel the life that is there instead of death. We are working on these things, and they are improving.



began, they didn't know anything about the guerrillas and studying the biographies of the journalist Elsa Blaquier and other documents that we obtained were very important to learn about them. Today we have more complete information about the guerrillas' lives. We also try to match the information given in the visits to the Memorial to the level of education of the visiting students.

For example, when the children visit, maybe they'll hear a professional explanation, but it won't have the same effect for them as when it comes from their teachers. Ideally, the information would come from their parents, but in this case we decided to prepare the teachers with outlines that correspond to the different educational levels, which

they can then use with their methodology to introduce the information through study programs.

For the schools for children with learning disabilities, we made a special program. In those cases the museum tour lasts 11 days, because the kids are more challenged and cannot easily understand what is explained to them. Today we can call this program a success.

Also, there are different approaches for each educational level. We explain things in a different way to the primary school students, but in the secondary schools and high schools, the exceptional students give the explanations, because this is more interesting to those who listen. These are also the students that make the outlines that are followed in each visit.

This challenge is very important for us, because if the visit doesn't reach them, the students end up only paying attention to the things that interest them. They don't live the visit like we want them to experience it.

Or they don't know what they are seeing...

Yes, or they don't know what they are seeing. There are other activities that we have done outside, such as camping in the Plaza. We've made a map of the Plaza with the teachers, pinpointing the places where the activities take place until approximately eleven at night, because that is when they go to sleep in another place. At first, the people were worried, but if somebody shows them how, the children take better care of the Plaza than anyone else.

You commented to me before that you are very satisfied with the work that is done with the preschoolers. Can you tell us what this consists of?

This is very important to us. The little children of the preschool really only know Che from the Korda photo. And this was one thing that we thought about a lot with the specialists that were working with us. We want the children to be able to identify themselves with him, with the things about Che that children can relate to. In this way, they could be like him, because he was a

with a secondary school and the Instituto Superior Pedagógico. (Superior Institute of Pedagogy).

We also have a work community project that we began for the city of Santa Clara.

Different representatives from all the Popular Councils came here, and we gave them a more detailed explanation. Now, they not only visit the Plaza, but visit in order to know and feel that Che forms a part of it and that it forms a part of them because it was made by the people of Santa Clara. Che is of them, of Cuba, and of the world.

more like an axis (which is what we call it), of the activities where the life and the work of Che and of the rest of the guerrillas will be present.

We also think that what we have created and what we are trying to accomplish is a more thorough study of why this struggle was necessary. We believe this is essential, because time passes and afterwards people will wonder why Che fought in this manner. It was necessary for his time, but to understand this, one must know exactly what happened in Latin America, what



person who, just like them, had problems, mistakes, defects, and virtues.

We once did a video with these children with a methodology designed for preschoolers. The video was presented in the preschool assembly a little while ago and it was a real success, because the children told anecdotes and spoke of both the good and the bad parts of Che. That was very important for us, that the children had this vision of him instead of something as out of reach for them as the Korda photo.

Is there another project linked to your work?

Yes, there is another activity that we began to do for a school where we created a group of speakers to teach about the environment using the plants in the Plaza, and currently we are working

What did you hope for in perpetuating the memory of Che?

We thought that it is necessary to study Che systematically, corresponding to the levels of education. This was not seriously being done, and so consequently, we didn't think that people thoroughly knew about Che. That this be included in the study programs is necessary, and we are now in the process of making that happen.

Last year, we began to motivate the children to think of Che with activities such as painting, commemorating the significant dates, and teaching them while watching videos. But now we are trying to begin (and we are thinking of the next course), to introduce a more systematic form in the study programs. We're not talking of another class, but

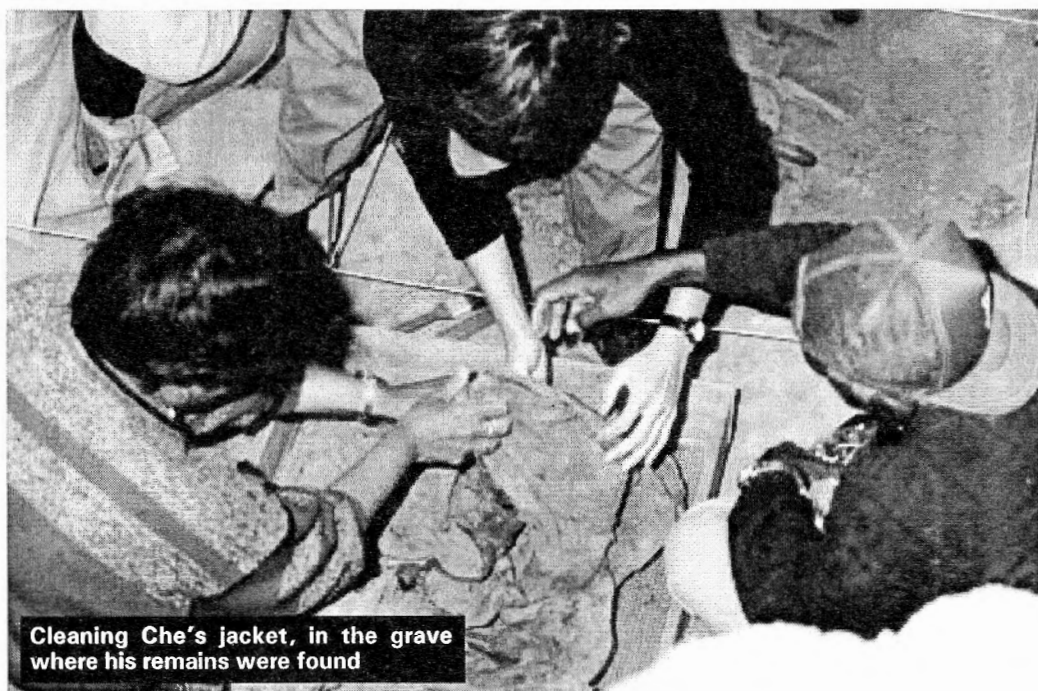
was happening in the world and why this fight was necessary. We believe that this is essential for Cubans to know.

We already had our first workshop here, of everything what was being done in the different schools. Some had more extraordinary work than others, of course, because not everybody can always have the same rhythm. But they have all done enough and this can be seen in the pedagogy.

The work here is extraordinarily beautiful and honors all the people who have contributed to it ■

A Mission of
Honor and
History

In Search of the Guerrilla Bones



Teresa Valdés

With the exceptional testimony of Doctor María del Carmen Ariet García, Scientific Coordinator of the Center of Che Guevara Studies, *Tricontinental* divulges new details about the discovery on the Valle Grande airport runway of the mortal remains of the members of the guerrilla in Bolivia and their leader, Che Guevara

*And if the iron comes across our way
we ask for a shroud of Cuban tears
to cover the guerrilla warrior bones
in transit to the history of America
Nothing else.*

Che, Mexico, 1956

“The remains of Che Guevara are buried in the airport of Valle Grande”, the retired General Mario Vargas Salinas said on November 9, 1995, in a decisive testimony before the subsequent discovery of the remains of the Heroic Guerrilla and the other combatants in the Bolivian guerrilla.

Along with the desire to officially test old versions about possible burial locations, this declaration opened the way for forensic investigations and unleashed a boom in the international

press similar to that of 1967. The only thing that was still needed was the means to start work in the old runways of the airport.

At the insistence of the Association of the Families of the Martyrs and Disappeared in Bolivia (ASOFAMD) and with international pressure, the Gonzalo Sánchez government approved a Supreme Resolution on November 25, authorizing us to investigate this declaration. Initially the collaboration of a team of Argentinian forensic anthropologists was requested, and they were the first group to arrive in Bolivia on November 29, 1995, to begin the search within an area of 2,000 square meters in the identified location.

In Cuba, where inquiries into the whereabouts of the bodies had taken place since 1967, a participative strategy was developed upon hearing the declaration of Vargas Salinas. With this objective, the first that went to Bolivia was a representative of the Cuban families of Che and Tamara Bunke (Tania), Doctor Jorge González Pérez (Popy), Director of the Institute of Legal Medicine.

Between December 1995 and March 1996, the scientists found the first four human remains of Jaime Arana Campero, Octavio de la Concepción y de la Pedraja, Edelberto Lucio Galván Hidalgo and Francisco Huanca Flores. The discovery was overblown in the press, because it took place in Cañada del Arroyo, five kilometers away in the outskirts of Valle Grande, and the remains of Che had not been found. In reality, none of the four cadavers belonged to the combatants of La Higuera, nor of Ñancahuazú. All of them had fallen in the battle of Cajones on October 14, 1967.

After that discovery the official search was detained and the team of Argentinian forensic anthropologists was forced to retire due to a lack of resources to independently carry out the excavations. However, they prepared a report of their work results that facilitated our entrance as a team. Cuba had already been involved since March 1996, because the Argentinians had collaborated with Cuban geophysicists.

The Cuban government precisely stated that its objective was the discovery of all the remains possible without prioritizing, and its request was granted by its Bolivian counterpart.

The History of the Search

Since 1984, I have worked on Che's Personal Archive, researching his life and work, fundamentally his political thought, about which I have already published a book. At the time of the declaration of Vargas Salinas, I was in Argentina studying Che's younger years, but since the beginning of the search, I formed a part of the team organized by Doctor Jorge González Pérez (Popy) which consisted of various specialists, geophysicists, geologists, archeologists, anthropologists, and surveyors. I was included as a social-historical researcher, because it was important to follow the trail of history and study the social surroundings.

With the news that we were at the point of discovering Che's remains, the paperwork for the team's travel was rushed

For Every Great Work We Need Passion



Centro de Estudios
CHE GUEVARA

The Center of Che Guevara Studies, in Havana, Cuba, has defined as its essential objective the study and dissemination of Che's life and work, especially the analysis of the progression of his thought, intimately linked with the development of his own existence.

Scholars can get closer to Ernesto Che Guevara by examining his most significant intellectual contributions and his important revolutionary acts.

The Center of Studies has compiled unpublished materials used for the basis of the bibliographies in Che's Personal Archive. From those we have published a set of original texts, written in the different circumstances of his revolutionary life. Among the most notable are *Notas de Viaje (Travel Notes)* and *Otra vez (Another Time)*, where he narrates his juvenile experiences in his extensive journey through Latin America, as well as *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo (Episodes of the Congo Revolutionary War)* through whose pages he destroys previous distortions of the truth and broadens our knowledge of the international struggle in Africa.

Additionally, the results, preparation and execution of the social-historical research project for the search of the remains of Che and the other guerrillas who fell in Bolivia, that Doctor María del Carmen Ariet García, Scientific Coordinator of the Center participated in, deserves special recognition.

We can assume that good will come from the works that develop the communal action of the Center of Che Guevara Studies, much like the unforgettable guerrilla affirmed in a card to his family: "*For every great work we need passion, and for the revolution we need passion, a great dose of boldness, things that we have as united human beings*".

To find out more, contact:

E Mail: centroche@enet.cu

Website: <http://www.cubasi.cu/che/index.htm>

Chronology of the Appearances of the Guerrillas

**December 12, 13, 17, 1995 and
March 15, 1996**

Jaime Arana Campero
Octavio de la Concepción y de la Pedraja
Lucio Galván Hidalgo
Francisco Huanca Flores
*Fallen in combat at Cajones on
October 14, 1967*

June 21, 1996

Carlos Coello Coello, (Tuma)
*Fallen in combat at Alto Seco on
June 26, 1967*

June 28, 1997

Ernesto Guevara de la Serna
Rene Martínez Tamayo
Alberto Fernández Montes de Oca
Juan Pablo Chang Navarro
Aniceto Reinaga Gordillo
Simeón Cuba Sanabria
Orlando Pantoja Tamayo
*Fallen in combat at la Higuera on
October 8, 1967*

February 11, 1998

Roberto Peredo Leigue (Coco)
Mario Gutiérrez Ardaya
Manuel Hernández Osorio
*Fallen in combat at Quebrada del Batán on
September 26, 1967*

February 13, 1998

Julio Méndez Corne
*Fallen in combat at Mataral on
November 15, 1967*

September 19, 1998

Haydeé Tamara Bunker Bide (Tania)
*Fallen in combat at Vado del Yeso on
August 31, 1967*

June 7, 1999

Juan Vitalio Acuña Núñez (Joaquín)
Israel Reyes Zayas
Gustavo Machín Hoed de Beche
Walter Arancibia Ayala
Moisés Guevara Rodríguez
Apolinar Aquino Quispe

through, and I left Argentina for Bolivia on March 30, 1996. At the end of this year, geophysicists and geologists began to search *en sito* as they had done together with the Argentinian forensic anthropologists, meticulously studying the earth from its formation, to pinpoint the exact area in which, if we could use more modern equipment, to penetrate 30 meters into the earth.

We had to take into account that there was no instrument that could help us if we didn't first examine the natural or manmade geological faults. When the geophysical equipment detected a rupture, we began the excavations using archeological techniques.

The geophysical investigations, using magnetic sensitivity, detected deep pockets in the earth and anomalies that provoked the movement of the earth in different stages.

My role as a historian was to specify the places to make the excavations and tests, establishing an order of priority from the different versions obtained from interviews, testimonies, and declarations as well as other existing documentation about what exactly had happened in 1967.

For example, of the 50 versions about the possible places of interment, five could be deemed as important from studying the area. It was important to find the place that was more likely to have been the specified location of the deeds that occurred. With a systematic focus, this would support the work of measuring the points for the other specialists.

The total of the fallen guerrillas in the Bolivian epic was 36 (38 if we include Inti Peredo and David Adriaola that died later in 1969). Of those, 23 were buried in Valle Grande and 13 in other areas. Our mission was to find all of them, without drawing distinctions. The most difficult task was to find isolated bodies, because although the guerrillas could have fallen in one place, the Armed Forces could have buried them in places far away, that possibly never have been checked.

It was a very collective and multidisciplinary work, where we coordinated the actions of all the specialists with the results of the social-historical research. The surveyors, geologists, anthropologists, forensic scientists, historians, all of us were responsible, and this is why they call the results a scientific feat.

Doctor Jorge (Popy) and I stayed the entire time. The other members of the Cuban group moved around and rotated, but we had the integral vision of the work and relations with all the specialists.

Che's Remains are Found

June 1997 was a very special time for us. We already knew that the elections weren't favoring Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada, who had made it easy for us to research. Instead, Hugo Bánzer, a dictator and assassin, who had actively fought against the guerrillas, was going to win the presidency.

If we couldn't find Che, we didn't know if we could stay in the country. Fortunately, the decisive discovery was on the 28th of that month, in a common grave situated on the auxiliary runway of the Valle Grande airport, filled with six more bodies: Alberto

Fernández Montes de Oca (Pacho), René Martínez Tamayo (Arturo), Orlando Pantoja Tamayo (Olo), Aniceto Reinaga (Aniceto), Simeón Cuba (Willy) and Juan Pablo Chang (El Chino).

All of those from La Higuera were there, although not all had fallen in combat. Some had been wounded and then murdered, which was what happened to Che.

That day I was in Santa Cruz on the road to La Paz, and Doctor Jorge González (Popy) called me on my cellular phone



Dr. María del Carmen Ariet, next to the grave where Che's remains were found

to give me the news. Everybody asked for me, because during two long years we had been together in the search. I remember that it was 9:30 in the morning, and I could get to Valle Grande by the afternoon. Journalists were there filming those emotional moments. The first thing I did upon arriving was to hug Popy.

Following the appearance of some of the bodies, I felt afraid. I was almost sure that it was the grave of Che's remains, but I was tormented by all the versions: the incineration, the transference to Panama, and the cutting off of other comrades' hands to confuse the process of identification. I was almost sure that he would be there, but facing so many versions, I had reservations in my heart.

Che was the last one found in the pit. Part of the remains was covered by a jacket, and as we looked through it we found a pocket with a little bag containing cut tobacco for his pipe. After the physical analysis, carried out by the anthropologist Héctor Soto, the frontal features were identified as belonging to Ernesto Guevara de la Serna.

In that moment, the Cuban team requested the presence of the Argentinian forensic anthropologists, for several reasons. The first reason was ethical, because they were who had initiated the search, but we also wanted to avoid the slander of the enemy. After two years of uninterrupted work by Cuban specialists, the remains of Che and his comrades had appeared precisely on the 30th anniversary of his fall. To say

Chronology of the ...

Fredy Maimura Hurtado
Fallen in combat at Vado del Yeso on August 31, 1967

1999
José María Martínez Tamayo
Fallen in combat at Río Rosita on July 30, 1967

February 9, 2000
Serapio Aquino Tudela
Fallen in combat at Equira on July 19, 1967

March 2, 2000
Restituto Cabrera Flores
Fallen in combat at Palmarito on September 13, 1967

April 11, 2000
Antonio Sánchez Díaz (Pinares)
Casildo Condori Vargas
Fallen in combat at Bellavista on June 2, 1967

April 16, 2000
Eliseo Reyes (Rolando)
Fallen in combat at El Mesón on April 25, 1967

Without a precise date:
Antonio Jiménez Tardio

Others who later fell:
Guido Peredo Leigue (Inti), *murdered in La Paz, September 9, 1969, buried in Beni, Bolivia, by his family*
David Adriazola Beizaga, *died December 31, 1969 in La Paz, Bolivia*

Still Missing:
Jesús Suárez Gayol, *fell at Iripiti on April 10, 1967*
Jorge Vazquez Viaña, *murdered at Camiri, after his capture on April 29, 1967*
Lorgio Vaca, Marchete, *drowned in the Río Grande on March 16, 1967*
Raúl Quispaya, *fallen in combat at Río la Rosita on July 30, 1967*
Benjamín Coronado Córdova, *drowned in the Río Grande on February 26, 1967*

The search continues...

that Fidel had invented this news would be the height of slander.

We were surrounded by journalists, photographers, camerapeople, and others of the most diverse backgrounds, including the military cordon that had always accompanied us. But during the moment when Che's remains were lifted, everyone fell into an unforgettable silence.

From Valle Grande the remains were transferred to Santa Cruz, where they were revered by the most humble populations. In the Santa Cruz hospital the technical cards were handed in with the forensic examinations. And the search continued.

In front of the runway, where the East Command used to be, a true guerrilla cemetery appeared in an area of several meters. There we found those that fell at Quebrada del Batán, whose corpses were transferred by the Command's army. On February 11, 1998, we found Manuel Hernández Osorio, Roberto Peredo Leigue, and Mario Gutiérrez Ardaya; on February 13, Julio C. Méndez Korne; and on September 19, Haydeé Tamara Bunke Bider (Tania).

In history, when the ambush of Vado del Yeso occurred, the people of the Octave Division penetrated in the Fourth zone. However, there was no record of this combat or how it came to be because it was reported in another place that corresponded to a different jurisdiction. Afterwards, the leaders ordered the bodies to be taken to the Valle Grande hospital with the justification of making identification studies.

About a year ago, a Bolivian soldier explained to me using reasonable arguments, why those four first cadavars were found five kilometers away from Valle Grande.

The buried were found on October 15, when the world already knew what had been done with Che. The first declaration was that he had died in combat and afterwards we knew that this wasn't so. In the press, strong denunciations were written about the maltreatment of the detained and we expected the arrival of the Human Rights Commission, that with only one look at the bodies, could confirm the treacherous way in which they were murdered. Because of this, information of what had happened in the area had practically disappeared.

And the Other Guerrillas

We continued investigating to find the remains of the rest of the guerrillas. And we stayed within an area of operations in the southern zone. We couldn't count on a wide range of information, because in 1967 there had not been diplomatic relations between Cuba and Bolivia.

As is known, the first historical work about the facts and the places of combat was carried out by comrades Adys Cupulls and Froilán González. We completed their existing

account with testimonies and studies of the area. Only with the integration of all the information could we find out exactly where the interments were.

For example, we looked for Eliseo Reyes (San Luis) for three years using the testimonies of Harry Villegas and Urbano, that described an area with a river surrounded by trees. However, studies confirmed that floods had transformed the area, and now only sands remained on the banks.

On a certain day, Doctor Jorge proposed a visit to a distant community 14 kilometers from us to look for a possible expert of some pending data in my investigation. I will never forget this person's name, Abel Medrano.

When I arrived at his house, not two minutes passed before I explained who I was and he responded:

"The guerrilla that you are looking for is buried 700 meters from here. I'll show you. I will show you because you have done humanitarian work, without having any business or political interests".

It wasn't 700 meters, but 1000 meters, one kilometer. But if we hadn't gone to speak with this man, we would have been delayed much more. The social-historical investigation helps us understand the mentality of the Bolivian peasant better. First they study us, and after some time around us, they get to know us, greet us, and finally toast us with the traditional drink, Chicha.

During these years of work the group lived together with the area's inhabitants and there was a very special communication and understanding between us while we performed daily tasks around our tents. We can't deny that the conditions were very difficult, especially for me, who was the only woman of the group.

During those five years, Cuba was able to destroy the calumnies that were attempted against our research and the search of the remains of Che and the rest of the comrades. The remains were received with profound signs of respect and an emotional homage from hundreds of thousands of people and cities, en route to the city of Santa Clara, the destiny of his peregrination. The guerrillas returned converted into our "military reinforcement detachment" as Fidel described them in the memorial service.

The bones of the guerrillas carry an extraordinary value, a gigantic lesson of dedication to the universal cause of the humble, and to solidarity as a feeling of love between the people. In that battle, they left their prints on Latin American and world history.

Our group, independent of our specializations, lived that page of glory, devoted to the sacred mission of searching for the rest of the remains, considering it as a one-and-only moment in our lives. History offered us that privilege and that honor ■



Illustrations: Raúl García

Word and Action, Verb and Thought

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– *Where are you, knight of glory,
knight the first among many?*
– *In my legend of death I am present:
in my story, milady, in my story.*

Mirta Aguirre, Cuba.

No one questions these days the entry in history of the Heroic Guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara, whose figure stands out as world paradigm for each new generation. Literature has contributed to keep his legend alive. Many have been the writers who have made Che an object of just exaltation and conveyor of ideals still unattained, and have known how to express it with high aesthetic quality and ideological commitment. “Ancient Song to Che Guevara”, by Cuban poet Mirta Aguirre, is an example of it.

But one of the most interesting events is undoubtedly his “legend” within oral literature. It is known how strong oral history can be in the group

memory of peoples. Thus, for example, Virgilia Cabrita, the Bolivian shepherdess he met on October 7, 1967, who after more than three decades still lives in the same hut, stated to the Brazilian “Veja” magazine that Che is to be seen from the hilltop in some directions, and announces the arrival of water. She says that a river was born at the place touched by Che and that he has never come out of those mountains. “He is my partner”, she adds. Also Dora and Juan Escalante, from Vallegrande, said to the same source: “It might be absurd, but there is still some life in him. It seems to us that his eyes still regard and protect us”. There is the myth, eternal source for literature.

**When he fell
heroically in
Bolivia he carried
in his sack a
mathematics book
(who does not
acknowledge to
mathematics its
part of poetry?) and
a copy many times
read and re-read of
that "General
Chant", an epic of
America**

However, it is not Che Guevara as source of inspiration and veneration for writers and peoples who carry out their group imagery the purpose of this work, but rather an aspect of his personality that not always receives sufficient promotion: his personality as a writer, his literary competence.

Jonathan Culler, in his work "The Literary Competence", states that "literature, as any other intellectual activity, is based on conventions that should be of common knowledge both to the reader and the writer. Writing a poem or a novel is committing oneself immediately with a literary tradition. Even when the author does not think of the readers, he himself is a reader of his own work and will not be satisfied with it unless he may read it in such a way that it produces aesthetic effects" (Culler, p.91).

In turn, the Spanish philologist and professor Daniel Cassany, in his book "Learning the Language" states that literary competence means having enough information on the literary event, knowing works and authors, styles, periods, identifying and mastering stylistic techniques and resources, having a base on the cultural references and traditions, personal criteria to select a book according to interests and tastes and not only enjoying literature but incorporating it fully in daily life. Ernesto Guevara fulfilled all these requirements.

In the first place, it is absolutely necessary to mention the base of all literary competence: the competence to communicate. Language serves as an oral or written channel to express ideas and feelings. Che's Spanish is inserted in the cultural standards, it adopts a "standard" form of the Spanish spoken in America, and when he inserts colloquial language in certain communicative situations he introduces with full strategic competence those terms that correspond to that type of address. He develops all styles: academic, official, journalistic, colloquial,

literary or artistic. Let us see some examples:

The use of Americanisms taken mainly from Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Cuba as a result of his personal experiences when touring Our America and the incorporation of neologisms and phrases add liveliness and authenticity to his chronicles, particularly in *Travel Notes, Episodes of the Revolutionary War* and the *Diary in Bolivia*. This vibrant colorfulness grants both aesthetic and idiomatic value to his work. The terms always express problems of an idiomatic, social or geographical nature as well as local customs and manners. Worthy of mention are: abarca, achacao, ahorrista, Avemariapurísima, bohío, buches de bilis, cacaré, cotuda, chaco, chankaka, charqui, gaucho, hochi, mate, patojo, tapera, zapallo and many others.

There appear suggestive phrases from some Latin American regions, such as "agua de borrajas", a pejorative Peruvian form; of popular use in Cuba, "auras de la misma calaña", "al canto de un gallo", "pega y huye", etc. Among his contributions in the form of neologisms should be mentioned: estatalizar, referring to the nationalization of enterprises and, with a wide sense of humor, "fidelazo", "letrincracia" (in the criticism to the Alliance for Progress), "cara de cerco", meaning fearful, and "el sube", meaning beating or reprimand. In the *Diary in Bolivia* he "echó tremenda bronca", "descarguitas", "leyó la cartilla" and referred to the phrase "dar un espectáculo" (put up a show). What is American is not only in the language but also in the topics he handles and the characters he meets.

Quite different is his language in the diplomatic arena:

"Mister President, Messrs. Delegates:

The Cuban representation to this Assembly takes pleasure in fulfilling, in the first place, the pleasant duty of

greeting the incorporation of three new nations to the important number of those that discuss world problems at this forum. In the persons of their President and Primer Ministers we greet here the peoples of Zambia, Malawi and Malta, and express our hopes that these countries become part from the start of the group of non-aligned nations against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism”.

Next he exposes the following with ideological firmness and literary beauty:

bear fruit in the continent and, as expressed in the Second Declaration of Havana, this epic ahead of us will be written by the hungry masses of Indians, of peasants without lands, of exploited workers; it will be written by its progressive masses, honest and brilliant intellectuals who are so common in Latin America. A struggle of masses and ideas, an epic that will be carried ahead by our peoples, ill-treated and despised by imperialism; our peoples unknown till today, who already begin to deprive it



“Cuba, Messrs. delegates, free and sovereign, without chains that tie it to anyone, without foreign investments in its territory, without pro-consuls who guide its policy, may speak with its forehead on high at this assembly and prove the righteousness of the phrase with which it was baptized as “Free Territory in America”. Our example will

of sleep... Because this great humankind has said Enough! and has started to walk. And its march of a giant will not stop until it has conquered its true independence...”

As may be seen from this speech from 1964 at the 19th General Assembly of The United Nations, a different communicative situation determines that

he change and select another language and tone in the counter-reply to a representative of Somoza's Nicaragua, who pretended to deprive him of the right to represent Cuba alleging that he had an Argentinean accent.

"With regard to Nicaragua, we wanted to tell its representative, even though I did not quite understand his full argumentation with regard to accents – I think he referred to those of Cuba, Argentina and perhaps also to the Soviet Union – in any case I hope he did not find a North American accent in my address, because that would be truly dangerous. Indeed, it might be the case that in the accent something from Argentina might escape when speaking. I was born in Argentina, that is no secret to anyone. I am Cuban and I am also Argentinean, and if the illustrious lordships of Latin America take no offense, I feel as much a patriot of Latin America as of any Latin American country. Just like anybody else and at the moment it becomes necessary I would be willing to give my life for the liberation of any of the countries of Latin America without asking anything from anyone, without claiming anything, without exploiting anyone" (Complete Works, Vol. II, pp. 561-562).

It must be added that in this idiomatic, strategic and social and cultural capacity of Che, his beautiful voice, full of tints, confer him the talent of a great communicator, and in his literary work oratory will hold an outstanding place, not only for what he said but for how he said it. In the counter-reply the fine irony appears, but the sense of humor constantly colors his communication, making him a true master.

With a more colloquial and fraternal character, since he addresses his friend and guerrilla comrade Camilo Cienfuegos, here is an example of critical humor referred to a night in the Otilia:

"I have learned in ancient books where they speak about the fate that you don't come very far

In a letter to the Argentinean writer Ernesto Sabato he says: "When I read your book *One and the Universe*, which fascinated me, I did not think that you could possess what was most sacred to me in the world: the title of writer..."

you fool, if I follow your way."

M.I.O.

"I will reach you soon. Prepare cigars. Kisses to you all" (Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 389).

As may be observed, the use of the octosyllable, the consonant rhyme and the original signature "mine" (M.I.O.) draws our attention. In the epistolary genre, of which he was also a master, we find an example of this aspect of his other, more colloquial discursive form in the letter to Ma. Rosario Guevara.

"I really do not know from what part of Spain my family comes. Naturally, it was a long time ago when my ancestors left there with one hand in front and the other behind, and if I do not continue to have them in that position it is because of how uncomfortable it is" (Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 685).

Another example refers to his piece of oratory at the Central University of Las Villas; on one hand the impeccable use of poetic images and on the other his humorous tone:

"What do I have to tell the University as Article One, as the essential function of its life in this new Cuba? I have to tell it to paint itself mulatto, not only the students but the professors, to paint itself worker and farmer, to paint itself people, because the University is nobody's patrimony and

belongs to the people of Cuba, and this people is here today, rose in arms and broke the dam of reaction (...) the University must be flexible, it must paint itself black, mulatto and worker, peasant, or remain without doors, and the people will break them and will paint the University with the colors that suit it."

"...When this has been achieved no one will have lost. We will all have won and Cuba will be able to continue its march toward the future with a more vigorous step and will not have the need to include in its staff this doctor, commander, bank president and today professor of pedagogy who bids farewell to you all" (Complete Works, Vol. II, pp. 34-38).

The literary capacity of Che Guevara may not only be evidenced in his extraordinary communicative capacity, in its different aspects: idiomatic, strategic and social-discursive, but also in his academic training by means of a training instrument such as reading. It is not by chance that from the moment of his arrival to the Sierra Maestra in Cuba he had an essential concern for the rise of the cultural level of his troops and the teaching of the first letters. From his work and multiple testimonies one appreciates in the formation of his personality the influence of writers, works, movements and styles.

As a reader he was insatiable. Che read all the time and everywhere. His friend Granados, with whom he traveled throughout Latin America, told that in Peru, having discovered a library at the Cuzco, he nourished himself from books on History and Archaeology. In Mexico he worked as a book seller for a printing house of Fondo de Cultura Economica and later as a book guardian in exhibitions. There he read without any trouble. Days before the voyage to Cuba in the Granma he bought his comrade Carlos Bermudez "Reportage at the Foot of the Gallows" by Fucik and "The Young Guard" by Fadeev. At the Sierra Maestra, while others slept he read, at any time, during his few rests and many

times beside the fire. His sack was one of the heaviest...

It has been said that one not only learns something from reading, but that the reading of a literary text turns one into someone. However, it also means dominating a polysemic language, not univocally predictable, where the reader constantly transgresses the text with his experiences by making a circular and remodeling reading. The reading fills up like a sponge of a subjective coloring, and as the sign system which is the reception of the text, it will always lead to different approaches and points of view, to a re-creation in which Ernesto Guevara is a master, without ever forgetting that together with the aesthetic and meta-textual function of literature is its social character, since through it one appreciates what is cognitive, expressive, axiological or evaluative – which he always bore in mind – and why not? the ludic, the divertimento and the pleasurable leisure. Guevara also knew how to always wisely insert literary text and economic, political and sociological context.

In his farewell letter to his parents he says: “Once again I feel on my heels the ribs of Rocinante. I return to the road with my shield under my arm” (Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 693). The wise lesson of Don Quixote and the humanism of the Renaissance had been assimilated in the mind, in the heart, and translated into facts. He was about to rush to undo injustices and defeat giants.

He liked “The Flowers of Evil” by Baudelaire in a French which he mastered, and Neruda’s “General Chant”. When he fell heroically in Bolivia he carried in his sack a mathematics book (who does not acknowledge to mathematics its part of poetry?) and a copy many times read and re-read of that “General Chant”, an epic of America. Fernandez Retamar, in an issue of the magazine CASA, tells of the last time he saw Che: “... we said good-by (...) I saw



Che with his back to me, walking slowly and earnestly along a long, inner hall of the Ministry. Of course I was far from even imagining that this would be the last image I would have from him. When I was going down in the elevator I asked myself without finding an answer, why had Che asked Manresa to copy that poem for him and not say anything. It was Neruda's "Farewell". Two stanzas of this poem are reproduced below

which indicate the emotional state and sensibility of Che:

I am leaving. I am sad, but then I am always sad.

I come from your arms. I don't know where I'm going.

From your heart a child says good-by to me.

And I say good-by to him.

Also, together with his youth readings such as Jack London, Dumas and Verne, he liked Latin American storytelling. It is no coincidence that

one of his "Chronicles of the Revolutionary War" bears the

title "Drifting", where he and his men put themselves in the same situation of awaiting death of the homonymous work by Horacio Quiroga.

Previously, quoting London and on the same topic of death he narrated:

"...I remained lying, fired a shot to the woodland following the same impulse of the wounded man. Immediately I began to think of the best way to die in that minute in which everything seemed lost. I remembered an old story



by Jack London in which the protagonist, leaning on a tree trunk, decides to end his life with dignity since he knows he is condemned to die frozen in the icy Alaska zones. It is the sole image I recall". Maybe in La Higuera that image of assuming death with dignity and heroism accompanied him... and he thought of that episode.

Also in the literary readings of the Heroic Guerrilla Warrior were not only the classical western thought but a leading line of ethical nature that traverses Latin American literature and becomes concrete in Rodo, Vasconcelos and, already in Cuba, a deeper knowledge of Jose Marti.

The poetry of the Spaniard Leon Felipe is one of his favorites. In a friendly letter he says to him:

"Master:

"Already several years ago, when the Revolution seized power, I received your latest book, dedicated by you.

"I never thanked you for it, but I always had it in mind. You might perhaps be interested in knowing that one of the two or three books I have at my bedside is "The Deer", and I can rarely read it because in Cuba sleeping, failing to fill up time with something or simply resting is a sign of bad leadership.

"The other day I attended an event that was a great experience for me. The hall was crowded with enthusiastic workers and there was an atmosphere of the new man around us. A drop of the failed poet I carry inside emerged and I appealed to you to indulge in a polemic at a distance. It is my message, I beg you to interpret it as such" (Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 690).

In a letter to the Argentinean writer Ernesto Sabato he says: "When I read your book *One and the Universe*, which fascinated me, I did not think that you could possess what was most sacred to me in the world: the title of writer..." Observe that he uses the verb in the past: "was" and not "is", since in those days the most sacred thing was his mission

as a revolutionary. Later on he sends him his work on the guerrilla war. In spite of Che's modesty not wanting to consider himself at the level of his primitive goal of being a writer, he already was one. His cultural qualification and his talent and artistic sensibility endorsed it. When he started publishing there was never an urge for profit, but a social and revolutionary service based on the aesthetic and ideological weapons of true art. Let us read what he tells Haydee Santamaria, heroine of Moncada, in this regard at the time she was directress of the prestigious Casa de las Americas:

"Dear Haydee:

"I instructed the Association of Writers to put that money at your disposal as a compromise settlement in order not to start a struggle of principles that has wider reach on account of a silly question.

"The only important thing is that I cannot take a cent for a book that does nothing more than telling the vicissitudes of the war. Make use of the money as you please.

"A revolutionary greeting.

"Homeland or Death. We shall overcome. Commander Ernesto Che Guevara." (Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 689).

Undoubtedly, CASA invested the money satisfactorily in publications affordable to the Cuban people, eager for knowledge.

Another aspect that conforms his literary competence is the one referred to his aesthetic ideas that continue to ripen together with his ideological projection. In "Socialism and Man in Cuba", his lucid epistolary essay, a true masterpiece, not only the writer but also the theorist of art problems and the artist in a new society that builds socialism are to be noted.

"I will now attempt to define the individual, the actor of that strange and passionate drama which is the construction of socialism, in his double

In "Socialism and Man in Cuba", his lucid epistolary essay, a true masterpiece, not only the writer but also the theorist of art problems and the artist in a new society that builds socialism are to be noted

existence of unique being and member of the community.

"I think that the simplest is to admit his quality of non-mature, non-finished. The defects of the past move to the present in the individual conscience and continuous work has to be done to eliminate them.

"The process is a double one. On one side, society acts with both its direct and indirect education. On the other hand, the individual submits himself to a conscious process of self-education."

Che presents the personality as a unique, one and only process, his power of self-education and self-perfecting, and is going to grant society the function of contributing to it consciously, trying to maintain both tradition and innovation. Conscience will have a protagonist role and in it, the power of spiritual enrichment and the human growth of art will not fail to be handled.

"In the field of those ideas that lead to both productive and non-productive activities, it is easier to see the division between material and spiritual needs. For many years man has tried to liberate himself from alienation through culture and art. He dies every day the eight hours and more in which he acts as merchandise, to revive in our spiritual creation. But this remedy bears the germs of the same sickness: he who seeks communion with nature is a lonely being. He defends his individuality, oppressed by the environment, and reacts to aesthetic ideas like a unique being whose goal is to remain immaculate."

But the art that this essayist proposes may not be social isolation nor estrangement from the society that needs to be revolutionized, and he goes on saying:

"The superstructure imposes a type of art in which artists must be educated. Rebels are dominated by the machinery, and only exceptional talents may create their own work. The rest become wage earners or are crushed.

"Meaningless anguish or the vulgar pastime are comfortable valves to human restlessness; the idea of turning art into a weapon of denounce is opposed."

Warning is made about art as merchandise and of power – in the hands of the governing circles of power in capitalism – to introduce a pseudo-art. Allusions are made to the market laws, but at the same time a key idea is raised: the true artist will impose himself, and the penetration of the artistic image on reality will end by becoming a social being that educates himself and grows both spiritually and humanly. But Che alerts us on some negative experiences of the socialist countries at that time and particularly on the so-called "socialist realism".

"In countries that went through a similar process, there was an attempt to combat these trends with an exaggerated dogmatism. General culture became a taboo, and as highest point of the cultural goal was proclaimed an exact representation of nature. Therefore, it afterwards became a mechanical representation of the social reality that was intended to be shown, the ideal society, almost without conflicts or contradictions, whose creation was sought."

"Socialism is young and has errors. We, revolutionaries, many times lack the necessary knowledge and intellectual boldness to face the task of developing a new man with methods that are different from the conventional ones, and conventional methods suffer the influence of the society that created them. (Again he poses to himself the topic of the relation between form and contents.) The disorientation is great and the problems of the material construction absorb us."

In this work that is essential for the problems of art theory in socialism, Che Guevara offers his criticism of the failed road of "socialist realism" which proposed that reality should be reflected

not as it is, but as it should be, leaving aside the events of social life in some cases to be highlighted and contradictory in others. Fortunately, this concept finally did not crystallize in Cuba, although not without debate at first.

This was so, on one side, due to its literary and artistic tradition, where there was coincidence between the political and the aesthetic vanguard, of which José Martí is a supreme example; but also because of Fidel Castro's clear vision in his "Words to the Intellectuals". Che contributed to pinpoint this strategy and alerted the countries of Latin America in that direction, in addition to divulging internationally in this essay the position of the Cuban intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution.

"(...) Why attempt to look for the only valid recipe in the frozen forms of socialist realism? (...) But let us not attempt to condemn all forms of art subsequent to the first half of the 19th century from the pontifical throne of realism at all costs, because we would fall in a Proudhonian error of returning to the past putting a straitjacket to the artistic expressions of the man who is born and made today (...) There lacks the development of an ideological cultured mechanism that allows the research and clearing of weeds that are so easily multiplied in the fertile soil of the state subvention.

"The man of the 21st century is the one we must create, although it is still a subjective and non-systematized goal. Precisely this is one of the main points of our study and of our work, and in the same measure that we achieve concrete success on a theoretical base or vice versa, that we draw up theoretic conclusions of a wide nature on the basis of our concrete investigation, we will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of mankind.

"Summarizing, the guilt of many of our intellectuals and artists lies in their original sin; they are not truly

revolutionary. We may try to graft on the elm to obtain pears, but at the same time pear trees have to be planted. The new generation will come free from original sin. The probabilities that exceptional artists rise will be all the more frequent the more the field of culture and the possibility of expression widen (...) The day will come when revolutionaries sing the song of the new man with the authentic voice of the people.” (Complete Works, Vol. II, pp. 367-384).

In April 1967, the magazine *Tricontinental* published an exclusive text by Ernesto Che Guevara written several months before with force and extraordinary courage in the ideological and political aspects, a masterpiece in the style of his epistolary essays: the *Message to the Peoples of the World*: “Create two, three,... many Vietnams is the slogan” accompanied by the thought of Jose Marti “It is the hour of the furnaces, and nothing other than light is to be seen.”

He stated at that time: “The North American Imperialism is guilty of aggression. Its crimes are immense and distributed all over the world.

“We know it already, gentlemen! But also guilty are those who at this moment of definitions doubted as to making Vietnam an inviolable part of the socialist territory, running, yes, all the risks of a war of world reach, but also obliging the North American imperialists to take a decision. And guilty are those who maintain a war of insults and stratagems begun already a long time ago by the representatives of the two greatest powers of the socialist countries.

“Let us ask to obtain an honest answer: Is Vietnam isolated or not, balancing dangerously between the two powers in conflict?”

Che Guevara concludes his message with a premonition: “Wherever death finds us, be it welcome, provided that our war cry has reached a receptive ear and another hand stretches out to take up our arms, and other men get ready

to intone the mournful chants with rattles of machineguns and new cries of war and victory.”

But not only in these works in the form of an essay does the writer reveal himself. It is in poetry where the Cuban people make a first approach to “Che” Guevara through the reading of his “Chant to Fidel”. One appreciates an attraction to the chant of epic tones and the use of the metaphor as instrument to express his sensibility, to which he adds beautiful images and an addressable tone. To comment it one must start from the communicative situation: the march to the guerrilla warfare in a country of which he has references and a leader capable of convincing him and driving him to the struggle for an ideal. On the other hand, a poem that responds to his concept of art and the artist’s social role. Let us read:

Chant to Fidel

Let’s go,
ardent prophet of dawn,
along recondit wireless trails
to liberate the green cayman you love
so much.
Let’s go,
defeating offences with the forehead
full of insurgent Martí stars
we swear to achieve triumph or find
death.
When the first shot is heard and the
whole countryside
awakens with virginal amazement,
there, at your side, as serene combatants
you will have us.
When your voice spills to the four winds
agrarian reform, justice, bread, liberty,
there, at your side, with identical accents
you will have us.
And when the sanitary operation
against the tyrant
comes to an end
there, at your side, awaiting the last
battle
you will have us.
The day when the wild beast licks the
wounded flank

In this work that is essential for the problems of art theory in socialism, Che Guevara offers his criticism of the failed road of “socialist realism” which proposed that reality should be reflected not as it is, but as it should be

In the development of the story, Che creates an atmosphere in which silence becomes essential. How to cross the extremely difficult mountain sides, the silent march trying to keep the short distance and the need that not even "one broken branch break the usual humming of the woodland"

where the nationalizing arrow hits it,
there, at your side, with an arrogant heart
you will have us.

Think not that the ornamented fleas
loaded with gifts
might diminish our integrity;
we ask for a gun, its bullets and a rock.
Nothing more.

And if the iron comes across our way
we ask for a shroud of Cuban tears
to cover the guerrilla warrior bones
in transit to the history of America.
Nothing else.

It is important to point out the repetition of the imperative "let's go", which reveals the intention to urge to the struggle. In the poem, undoubtedly as a result of the emotion of that moment, he uses an emphatic tone that is proper of the epic. In its first two stanzas the lyrical speaker, as an introduction, calls Fidel "ardent prophet of dawn" and stresses his vision in the epithet and the beginning of a new era. The vanguard metaphor in the style of Maiakovski appears futuristic: "along recondite wireless trails". In the second stanza there is an attempt to show the spirit of combat and the presence of Marti's ideology, assumed as serene commitment in the face of a death that may be imminent. The assonance of the verses grants musicality to the text.

From the third to the fifth stanza the Movement's program appears completely fulfilled by the triumphant revolution. The use of the adjectives and the honesty and unquestioning loyalty with which the heroes are described is significant. In the conclusive sixth and seventh stanzas there are no ambitions, and the poet expresses it with an ironic personification: "and the ornamented fleas loaded with gifts". It is impressive how this poem, that reveals a Che who is still not at the summit of his literary maturity, anticipates his transit to immortality, and advances his farewell letter to his children and to Fidel: "We ask for a gun, its bullets and a rock,

nothing more". "A shroud for the guerrilla warrior bones" and "the transit to the history of America". "Nothing more". It is worthwhile to underline the use of rhythm in the polymetrics of the verses and the high documentary value for the history of Cuba and Latin America.

Another aspect of the writer Che is to be found in the pleasant prose, rich in description and natures of characters in an existential tone and acute observation. In the face of an apparently hurried prose there appears the mature writer, careful of every word, precise in the use of adjectives, clever in the use of verbs in movement, that grant interest and originality to the action and the sense of perpetuating a true feat. The revolutionary epic achievement and its men are the protagonists. He is a witness of his time, and adds to it his already analyzed literary competence, not only as a result of his bookish culture, his theoretical culture and his easy communication, but also because of a true aesthetic intention in an apparently formal carelessness.

Chronicles of the Revolutionary War was described by Fidel as a work that contains "the virtuousness of a classic of the language". Begun in February 1961, it was to remain unfinished after 28 chronicles because his new tasks demanded his modest efforts. Writer Luis Pavon commented that these works are not only the result of his notes and war diaries but that he enriched his memories with meetings or personal interviews held with that purpose and, at other times, by appealing to precise documents in order to achieve the greatest possible truthfulness.

In the same way that *Socialism and Man in Cuba* presents an excellent epistolary book, *Chronicles of the Revolutionary War* portrays the journalistic article, the chronicle on customs and manners, the political article and the genre of story in its most varied

structures and purposes. "The Murdered Cub" is a true example to exemplify the quality attained by Che Guevara in that capacity of synthesis and penetration of reality that is this story and which he had assimilated so well in his readings on the genre.

The title or parallel text announces as strategy of readable understanding what will be the conducting string of the plot. One may observe its structural perfection: introduction, development or climax and outcome. All the time there is a description of a group of facts or events, in this case the chase of Sanchez Mosquera (a colonel who directed the dictatorship's offensive) and within it something very intimately linked with the implicit meaning of the text: the death of a cub, masterly created through a use of the language based on the precise adjectives that will derive into the psychological climate that permeates the whole text. More than the external aspect of the anecdote, the chronicle shows with profoundness the psychology of the characters, where the guerrilla warrior Felix and Che Guevara are the characters that contribute to show the real protagonist: the cub.

In the introduction he says: In the difficult conditions of the Sierra Maestra it was a glorious day. In Aguarraves, one of the highest and most intricate valleys in the Turquino basin, we patiently followed the troops of Sanchez Mosquera. The stubborn murderer left a trail of burnt ranches, of grim sadness all over the region". After this thematic sentence in which he characterizes the day and the conditions and description of the

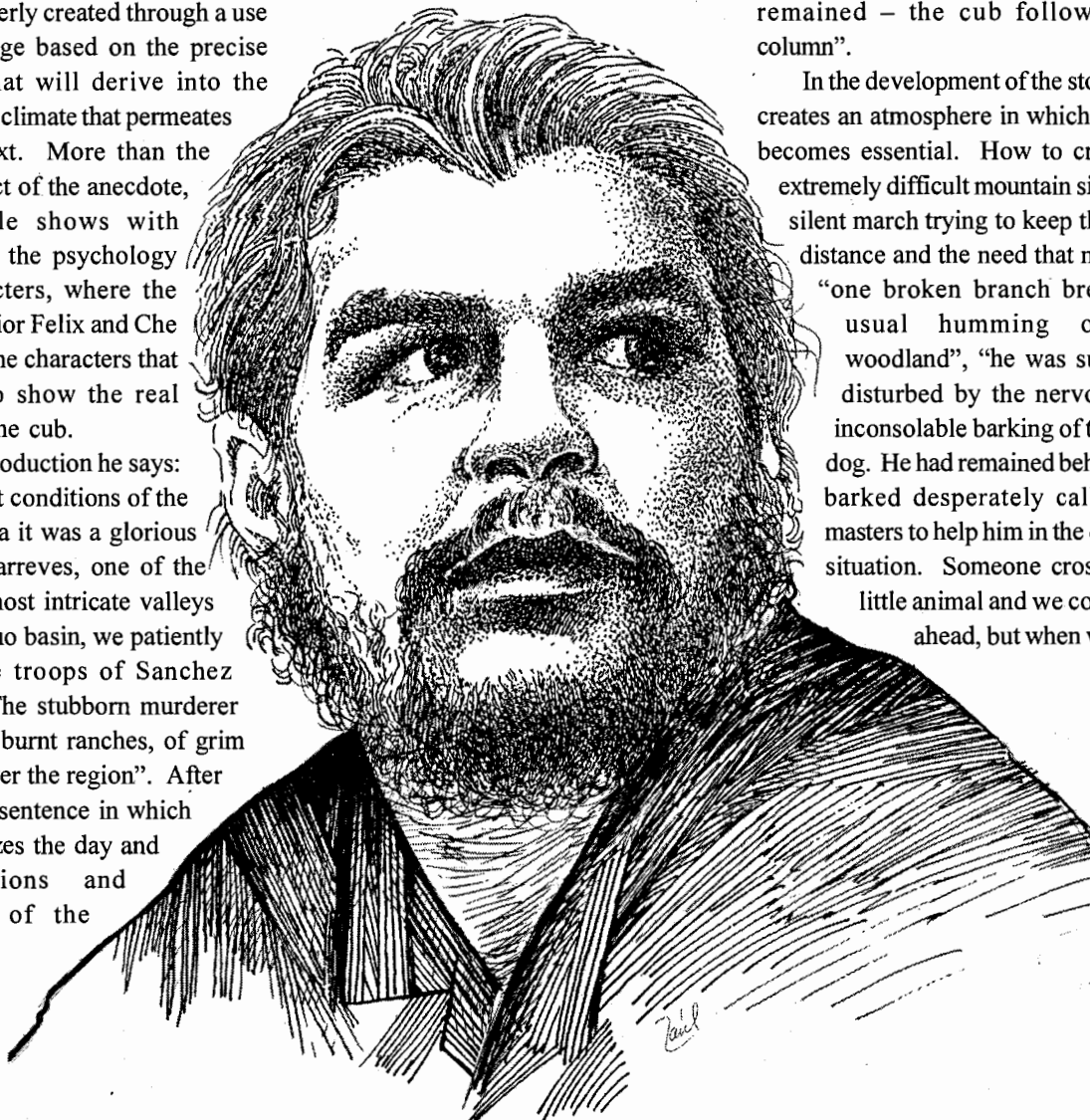
physical environment and of Sanchez Mosquera, whom he describes as stubborn murderer typified by the grim sadness he leaves behind, he refers to the mission he had together with Camilo, who was at the vanguard.

"My mission was to fall upon Sanchez Mosquera on his back and besiege him. Our main objective was the siege, therefore we followed with great "patience and at a distance" the tribulation of the huts that burned in flames in the enemy vanguard. We were far away, but the cries of the guards could be heard. We did not know how many of them there would be all together. Our column was walking with difficulty along the mountain sides while in the

depth of the narrow valley the enemy marched ahead."

When describing the mission the purpose is clearly shown: the siege. A key word – patience – and a threat – though not so far away, the cries of the guards could be heard. They could be many, but the march could be slow and difficult on the mountain sides. Immediately, to end the introduction, he establishes the point of attack and beginning of the conflict in the narration with a pronoun – all – and a condition – if it hadn't been for: "All would have been perfect if it hadn't been for the new pet: it was a small hunting dog, several weeks old. In spite of the repeated times Felix urged it to return to our operations center – a house where the cooks remained – the cub followed the column".

In the development of the story, Che creates an atmosphere in which silence becomes essential. How to cross the extremely difficult mountain sides, the silent march trying to keep the short distance and the need that not even "one broken branch break the usual humming of the woodland", "he was suddenly disturbed by the nervous and inconsolable barking of the little dog. He had remained behind and barked desperately calling its masters to help him in the difficult situation. Someone crossed the little animal and we continued ahead, but when we were



resting in the depth of a creek with a watchman controlling the movement of the enemy forces, the dog again began its hysterical yells. He no longer resigned itself with calling, he was afraid to be left behind and barked desperately”.

There are key words that anticipate the climax in the narrative or what many theorists call the turning point of the action. The broken silence, the troop’s resting moment in contrast with yells described as hysterical and the animal’s fear of abandonment in the face of the underlying fear of the troop to be discovered by superior forces. There is an adverb that creates the climax of suspense: desperately. Next, what makes the core of the story.

“I remember my sharp order: “Felix, that dog does not yell once more. You will be in charge of doing it. Hang it. It cannot bark again”. Felix looked at me with eyes that said nothing. Amidst the whole extenuated troop, as if centering the circle, were he and the little dog. Very slowly he took a rope, fitted it tight to the little animal’s neck and began to tighten it. The fond tail movements suddenly turned convulsive and then, little by little, extinguished at the rhythm of a very fine whine that could violate the throat’s gripping circle. I don’t know how much time went by, but the period of time that elapsed until the end seemed very long to all of us. After one last nervous movement, the cub ceased to struggle. He remained there, sickly, its little head bent over the woodland branches.

“We continued the march without even commenting on the incident...”

In this climax, the precision of the vocabulary and the total dominion of the narrative techniques by the writer draw our attention. The order is “sharp”, it is short and there is an imperative sentence – hang it – that leaves no doubt as to its compulsory fulfillment, followed by the negative sentence “it cannot bark anymore. Particular attention is granted

Thanks to that invariable habit of his to take down the main events of each day, we may have detailed, rigorously exact and invaluable information about those heroic final months of his life in Bolivia

to what will later on be essential in the outcome: Felix’ look with eyes that said nothing, and placing man and dog in space, in the center of the troop’s circle. The death movements are performed slowly and the dog’s last movements are described as fond for the transit to the convulse. He does not employ the past in the death but the gerund “extinguishing”, which gives idea of a more delayed, spaced, painful process, almost noiseless, as the moan was. The work with time synthesizes itself. In the face of the impact of death the notion of time is lost and what was really a lapse of time acquires sense of duration. To express the form in which the assassinated cub remains he resorts to the participle “sickly, his little head bent over the woodland branches”. That diminutive – little head – has a distinct affective shade. The narrative goes on with an expression that reveals everything: “without even commenting on the incident”.

“Now the silence of the troop was complete”. The story goes on with the description of the movement of the troop and the end of the mission. “There were no guerrilla casualties, they only found a buried “casquito” (Batista soldier).

“There had been struggle and one death. The dead one was one of them, but we knew nothing more”. “We returned disappointed, slowly”. “The

return became slow...” “We arrived at night to a house that was also empty”.

It is evident that all these signs gradually create the psychological climate. Wasn’t the cub also a casualty for the guerrilla? Why does the slowness and discouragement along the way repeat themselves? Why was the house empty? Was it perhaps that the cub should have been there waiting if its destiny had been a different one?

And next we come to the story’s outcome: “Someone was singing a tune with a guitar, since peasants’ homes were rapidly abandoned with all their belongings inside.

“I don’t know if the tune was a sentimental one, or if it was the night or the tiredness. What is certain is that Felix, who ate sitting on the floor, left a bone. A dog from the house came meekly and picked it up. Felix put his hand on the dog’s head, the dog looked at him. Felix in turn looked at it and we crossed something like a guilty look. We suddenly remained in silence. Among us there was an unnoticeable commotion. At our side, with its meek, picaresque look, with something of a rebuke, though observing us through another dog, was the murdered cub”. (Complete Works, Vol. I, pp. 330-332).

Other relevant milestones in Ernesto Che Guevara’s literary production are his Travel Notes and the war diaries in Congo and Bolivia.

In “A Necessary Introduction”, Fidel Castro said about the Diary in Bolivia:

“It was Che’s habit in his guerrilla life to take down carefully his everyday observations in a personal diary. In the long march through abrupt and difficult territories, in the midst of the wet forests, when the rows of men always bent because of the weight of their sacks, munitions and arms stopped for an instant to rest or the column received the order to halt and camp at the end of a tiring journey, Che – as Cubans fondly baptized him from the beginning – was seen drawing out a small notebook and

writing his notes with his small and almost tiny doctor handwriting.

What he could preserve from those notes served him later to write his excellent historical chronicles of the revolutionary war in Cuba, full of revolutionary, pedagogic and human contents.

This time, thanks to that invariable habit of his to take down the main events of each day, we may have detailed, rigorously exact and invaluable information about those heroic final months of his life in Bolivia.

These notes that were not written really to be published served him as work instrument for the constant evolution of the events, the situations and the men, while at the same time they channeled the expression of his profoundly observer and analytical spirit, many times tinged with fine humor. They are soberly written and have uninterrupted coherence from the beginning to the end". (Che's Diary in Bolivia, Instituto del Libro. La Habana, 1968, p.7).

For the purposes of this work we have taken only one aspect of the Diary that shows his originality, his capacity to characterize one whole day with only one short line and particularly the chronology of his feelings and thoughts. Maybe following this chronology the reader may fully understand this extraordinary epic. Let us follow this chronology of emotions and feelings.

- Day without novelty. (Nov. 9)
- Day without nothing to report. (Nov. 12)
- Day of little movement. (Dec. 17)
- The day started as usual. (Jan. 19)
- Day of total laziness. (Jan. 29)
- Last camping day. (Jan. 31)
- Laborious and slow day. (Feb. 2)
- Day of calmness and restoring of forces. (Feb. 6)
- Quiet day. (Feb. 14) Lost day. (Feb. 19)
- Day of slow march but with accidents. (Feb. 20)
- Black day for me, I stood up to it with all my heart. (Feb. 23) (Asthma)

- Day of war events. (Mar. 23)
- Day of little action but extraordinary mobility. (Mar. 29)
- Day of great tension. (Apr. 6)
- Day of belches, farts and vomits and diarrheas; a true concert of organs. (May 13)
- Day without movement. (May 20)
- Day of tension. (May 23)
- Black day for me. (Jun. 26) (Death of Tuma) Quiet day. (Aug. 1)
- Gray day. (Aug. 2) Gray and somewhat distressing day. (Aug. 28)
- Heavy and somewhat distressing day. (Aug. 29) Bad day. (Sep. 10)
- Tiresome day. (Sep. 14) Day of anguish. (Sep. 28)
- Another tense day. (Sep. 29)
- Another day of tension. (Sep. 30)
- Long and unnecessarily intense day. (Oct. 3)

From that day on, only two key ideas remain to be pointed out: October 6, when he says he did not have a quiet day and that there are 1 800 men in the zone looking for them, and October 7, when he announces that he is already being persecuted and there are 250 men present. He ends with this idea: "The news seems diversional".

This aspect of Che's notes and diaries cannot be closed without referring to that black day April 25 when Rolando dies: "When a halt was made I sent Urbano to order retreat, but he came with the news that Rolando was wounded. He was brought shortly after, already bloodless, and died when he was beginning to receive plasma. A shot had broken the femur and the whole vascular package. He bled to death before we could act. We have lost the best man in the guerilla and, naturally, one of its cornerstones, my comrade since the time when, almost a child, he was a messenger for Column 4 until the invasion and this new revolutionary adventure. Of his obscure death only the following could be said for a hypothetical future that might crystallize: "Your small corpse of a brave captain

has extended its metallic form in the immensity".

By devoting this final verse to render deep tribute to this unparalleled man, Che alludes to "a chant to Bolívar" by Neruda, where the Chilean poet says:

"Your small corpse of a brave captain has extended its metallic form in the immensity, all of a sudden your fingers come out of the snow and the austral fisher brings your smile suddenly to the light, your voice throbbing in the nets".

In this way, with Neruda's poetry of great influence on him and recalling Bolivar, he paid tribute to one of those great men who, like him, gave his life for the definite independence of "Our America", according to José Martí.

Art and ideology meet again in Che.

Finally, as a general qualitative evaluation, it seems proper to end with the words of the Cuban critic and essayist Graziella Pogolotti, who has stated: "He always wanted to use the right word, or better, the necessary word. He did it with a voice of his own, that made him one of the best prose writers of our language. Without unsubstantial words, without unnecessary adjectives, flesh and spirit, word and action, verb and thought form one sole thing, are intimately united". (CASA magazine No. 46, p. 152)

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Cheddi Jagan, Caribbean leader , speaks of Che

“He Was Reshape

Very few persons became legends in their lifetime. Che Guevara was one of them.

That Che was a giant, few can deny. He was a man of extraordinary qualities.

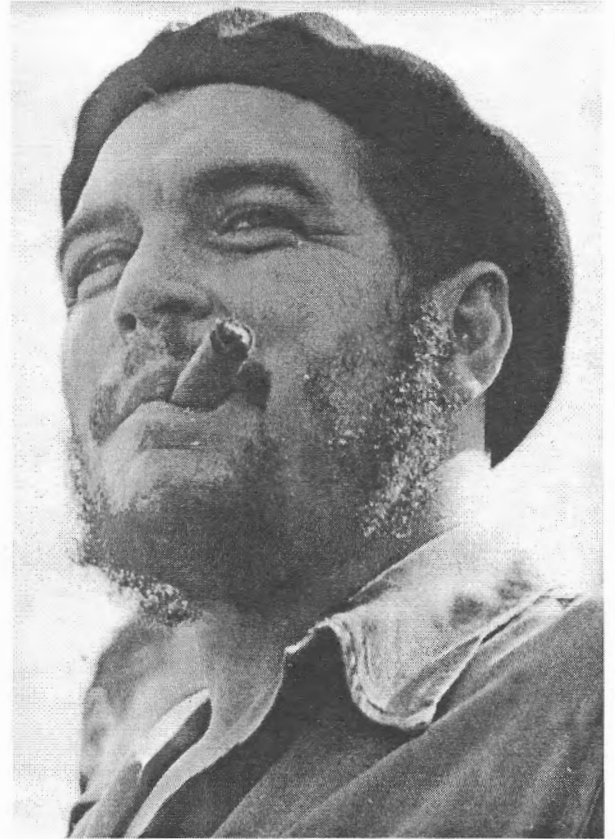
Regis Debray in his analysis of Che's military failure and tragic death in Bolivia quoted from Bernard of Clairvaux who in the year 1200 said these words: *“We are dwarfs perching on the shoulder of giants. We can see better and further than they can, not because our sight is keener or our height greater, but because they are carrying us, raising us to their gigantic level.”*

We're all dwarfs when it comes to measuring a man of Commandante Che Guevara's stature. We can ask this question - which many have pondered - how is it that after 20 years Che continues to attract the same veneration and devotion that he did when he was alive?

Che was a man of many parts, a complex man. Among his many attributes, he was a person of unusual courage. His military exploits are renowned and revered. According to Fidel Castro, *“Che was an incomparable soldier. Che was an incomparable leader. Che was, from a military point of view, an extraordinarily capable man, extraordinarily courageous, extraordinarily aggressive. If, as a guerilla, he had his Achilles' heel, it was this excessively aggressive quality, his absolute contempt for danger.”*

Che fits our vision of a perfect “new man” of the future - physically and morally strong. With incredible strength, he overcame a serious ailment. And to have practiced what he preached - a stern and sterling character, what the indomitable Vietnamese communist leader, Ho Chi Minh, described as revolutionary morality.

Anxious to the World”



That accounts for the apt description of him as a capable and efficient administrator. From November 1959, he served as Director of the National Bank of Cuba. In 1961, he was appointed as Minister of Industry. He was also Chief of the Industrial Department of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

As Minister of Industry, he had to correct earlier mistakes, which had been made in the immediate period of euphoria after the overthrow of Batista. In the zeal to move away from Cuba's one-crop economy, a policy of wide-ranging industrialization had been pursued. A lot of industrial machinery was still in crates on the wharfs. With the blockade, Cuba now realised that raw materials for industry could not be imported without serious problems. As he told comrade Janet Jagan - *"build your industries*

around your raw materials and waste by-products." Wise advice.

Pointing out his qualities in the industrial field, a Soviet writer noted: *"He held a guiding hand over the socialist transformation of industry for a period of four years. During this period private ownership of the means of production in Cuba was completely ended. Exploitation of the working people was halted. The country moved towards a planned economy. Chronic unemployment, the whip held over the working people in pre-Revolutionary Cuba, was now eliminated. The level of consciousness of the working people grew. Thousands of workers upgraded their skills, boosted production and joined in socialist emulation. American imperialism hoped for a collapse of the Cuban 'experiment' ...Cuban workers disappointed their hopes...Much of the*



His was not the position of a classroom intellectual, and theory and practice, thought and action; revolutionary intellectual and fighter were embodied in his personality as a single stream

credit for this belongs to the Communist Party of Cuba and to Che in particular, under whose leadership the complex and difficult transition from the rails of capitalist production to those of socialist production was effected."

But above all Che was a humanitarian, a revolutionary intellectual and fighter and an ardent internationalist.

As a doctor, Che was not content simply to practice his profession, cure sick individuals and live a comfortable middle-class life. His was a broader vision: national and social liberation; the curing of the ills of society through the elimination of imperialism and oligarchic domination, exploitation and oppression. Towards this objective, he dedicated his life. His humanity was expressed in the love for people - ordinary people for whom he was always prepared to risk his life.

In this regard, Che gave us some valuable lessons. In his book "*Socialism and Man*", he stated:

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is

impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without contracting a muscle. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, the most sacred causes and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend to the level of the ordinary man's daily expenditure of sentimentality... one must have a great deal of humanity and a strong sense of justice and truth in order not to fall into extreme degradation and cold scholasticism, into isolation from the masses.

Che was a perpetual student, always studying always learning. At one time, he even mastered linear mathematics for the more effective functioning of his responsibilities as a Minister.

But his was not the position of a classroom intellectual, and theory and practice, thought and action; revolutionary intellectual and fighter were embodied in his personality as a single stream.

He applied the Marxist classics in a thoroughly practical manner. His theory guided him at all times, as for example when he made the simple but profound analysis that national sovereignty was unthinkable without economic independence. According to the editor of Che's "*Episodes of the Revolutionary war*", he is described as a "*fully endowed revolutionary man, in whom the guerilla strategist and fighter embodied a Marxist outlook. He left many writings, which show his eager search for fresh theoretical insights over a broad range of interest. His was a revolutionary, a Marxist mind, over critical and open, aware that new revolutionaries always present new qualities and new problems.*"

Che showed excellent qualities as a writer. His highly esteemed classic on *Guerilla Warfare* is a bible for revolutionaries.

I had the privilege of having several discussions with Che both as head of

government and as leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. Those talks were wide-ranging and immensely illuminating. I could not help perceiving him as an intellectual and a visionary, one who was anxious to reshape the world, particularly the Third World.

His internationalism and humanitarianism were especially evident in the sympathy and support towards our struggle in the then British Guiana. No doubt, this was in part influenced by the unreserved support given to revolutionary Cuba by the People's Progressive Party and government which I had the honour of leading.

The agreements I concluded with Che were far-reaching and demonstrated the internationalism of revolutionary projects: a hydro-electric station; a wood-pulp factory; a rice agreement and a timber railway ties for cement barter deal; a Cuban Trade mission in British Guiana; a cultural exchange.

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The rice deal with Cuba was deemed “blood money” by the opposition United Force, meaning the payment for the rice was coming from the suffering and blood of the Cuban people!

The hydro-electric project had been recommended by British consultants after we (the PPP government) had nationalized the Canadian-owned Demerara Electric Company. It was a tri-state (Guyana-Cuba-USSR) cooperation venture. Its implementation would have prevented the recurrent blackouts of many years and the huge bill for fuel imports.

The US\$10 million loan at a low 2 percent interest rate for a wood-pulp

project, to be paid for in supplies of pulp, would have been the impetus for a huge timber development. At first, Cuba had shown an interest in the development of the project through a lease of forest land, as was the practice in colonial times. But Che told me that smacked too much of imperialist exploitation.

On the rice deal, when I asked why he was paying us 2 cents a pound more than we were getting from the west Indies, he said: put that to the solidarity of the Cuban Revolution to the Guyanese peasants.

The trade and cultural exchanges were opening the way for a better relationship and understanding between the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking Caribbean peoples.

Washington was no doubt angry with us that we broke the blockade against Cuba. The CIA conspired with the then reactionary political opposition parties and trade union leaders, and fomented and financed strike, strife, arson and terrorist bombings.

of US\$36 billion annually, has caused increasing misery for the toiling masses. The evidence has been compiled, analyzed and published in many countries and by many contributors, including the UN Economic commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), since Che was ambushed and killed in the jungles of Bolivia. All the evidence goes to validate Che's uncompromising stand throughout his short but glorious life in defence of the people.

On this his 60th Birthday Anniversary, the best tribute we can pay to the heroic Che is to continue the struggle with the same dedication and zeal he demonstrated. Let us pledge to finish the job he started.

In the words of his epitaph:

"Wherever death may surprise us, let it be welcome provided that this, our battle cry, may have reached some receptive ear and another hand may be extended to wield our weapons and other men be ready to intone the funeral dirge with the staccato singing of the machine guns and new battle cries of war and victory"

Each and everyone of us will pay on demand his own sacrifice...knowing that all together we are getting ever closer to the new man, whose figure is beginning to appear. Venceremos — Che.

Speech by Dr Cheddi Jagan, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party at an International Scientific Seminar on "The Revolutionary Thinking of Commandante Che Guevara" in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 8-11, 1988. Doctor Jagan was also Prime Minister of Guyana ■

The Cuban cement was inferior, the propagandists asserted; the building and hydro-dam would collapse.

And the Governor reserved the agreements I concluded for consideration by the Foreign Office, where they were stalled and killed, no doubt on advice from the US State Department.

Further, during the shipping airlines blockade and fuel cut-off from neighboring Trinidad, when Cuba responded with two ships - one with fuel, another with food - terroristic violence was resorted to on a wide scale.

In his address to the United Nations, Che gave us firm political support, alerting the international community to the intrigues of imperialism to destabilize our government.

His authentic internationalism was shown in his decision in setting aside family, fame and fortune to continue the war of liberation in Africa and Latin America. Having reached the pinnacle of success - the number two position in the Cuban leadership; the love and loyalty of the Cuban people - only a true revolutionary and internationalist would have taken the course he adopted: to start from the bottom again with gun in hand.

From the late 1960s when Che fought in Bolivia, the crisis has deepened.

The plunder of Latin America and the Caribbean by imperialism which in the 1981-85 period caused a net outflow

In his address to the United Nations, Che gave us firm political support, alerting the international community to the intrigues of imperialism to destabilize our government. His authentic internationalism was shown in his decision in setting aside family, fame and fortune to continue the war of liberation in Africa and Latin America

Accompanying the Heroes

Gerardo, Ramón, Fernando, Antonio y René, the five young Cuban anti-terrorist fighters that were imprisoned and condemned to long and unjust sentences in the United States, made themselves men with the stature of heroes, capable of the greatest sacrifices for their homeland and for humanity. They were inspired, like many of their contemporaries, by a phrase spoken by Fidel Castro in the public gathering of October 18, 1967.

That day, in the José Martí Plaza of the Revolution, the Cuban leader defined Che as a model that future generations could aspire to be like. Three of the young Cuban heroes, René, Gerardo, and Fernando, fought, like Che did, in other countries of the world, defending Angola's independence and with it, peace in Africa.

And today, when we read the cards, poems and journals written by The Five from distant and hostile prisons in different US states, we find a common running thread of frequent mentions or quotes of Che.

We know that The Five have, between their most dear images, some photos of the Guerrilla, and that they devour all the books they can that are related to his work and life, both in Spanish and English.

Tricontinental wrote to them asking for some personal words concerning their natural identification with one of the greatest revolutionaries of all time. Although we know that they all wrote something special, only the message from Ramón and a poem from Tony, (*El ejemplo del Che*) (*Che's Example*), have come into our hands by the close of this issue.

Some time before, we used some fragments from a card that Fernando sent to his comrade Rosa Aurora Freijanes, where he convinced her to read, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (*Episodes of the Revolutionary War*). In this issue of tribute we include that trilogy, accompanied by another poem written earlier by Tony, *Décimas para mi pueblo* (*Décimas' for my People*), where the Guevarian guide appears marked by a star that the poet-combatant for peace puts in his pack.

Since September 12, four years have passed since the the arbitrary and unjust incarceration of the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters unleashed one of the most abominable judicial processes ever of a political nature in the United States. While their defense lawyers prepare for a difficult appeal before the Atlanta Court, the world increases its demand for justice and liberty for these young people who, from prison, write beautiful words in homage to the universal symbol of the New Human.

1 Ten-line stanzas ■

Reading Che in Prison:

There is Nothing that Cannot be Achieved

Fernando González Llort

Che's two books describing episodes of the revolutionary wars in Cuba and in the Congo contain experiences and conclusions of incalculable value. These go from the simple anecdote on the narrated events, going through the analysis of the guerrilla warfare tactics and of the guerrilla as vanguard nucleus forged and strengthened in the process of the revolutionary war to guide the rest of the politically conscious part of the population to victory, to contributions to the Marxist theory on the revolution and identification of the main contradiction of the period: the one between exploiter nations and exploited peoples. Hence the need of universalizing the approach to the struggle for national liberation. The

countries and their peoples' struggles cannot be seen as isolated beings.

Even though today some (non essential) conditions that existed in those days have changed and the tactics of the revolutionary struggle have to adapt to those new circumstances to make them the most adequate and have them lead to victory, books are of extraordinary current importance.

At an emotional level, although also rationally, they are books that leave you with the certainty that there is nothing that cannot be achieved, even if the case of Congo that Che himself defines as "the history of a failure" is taken into consideration. The unyielding will and the most profound revolutionary conviction are the main weapons to overcome even the most hopeless circumstances, even when there exists a majority whose poor political conscience does not allow it to fully understand that final purpose for the struggle nor enjoy the same certainty in the victory.

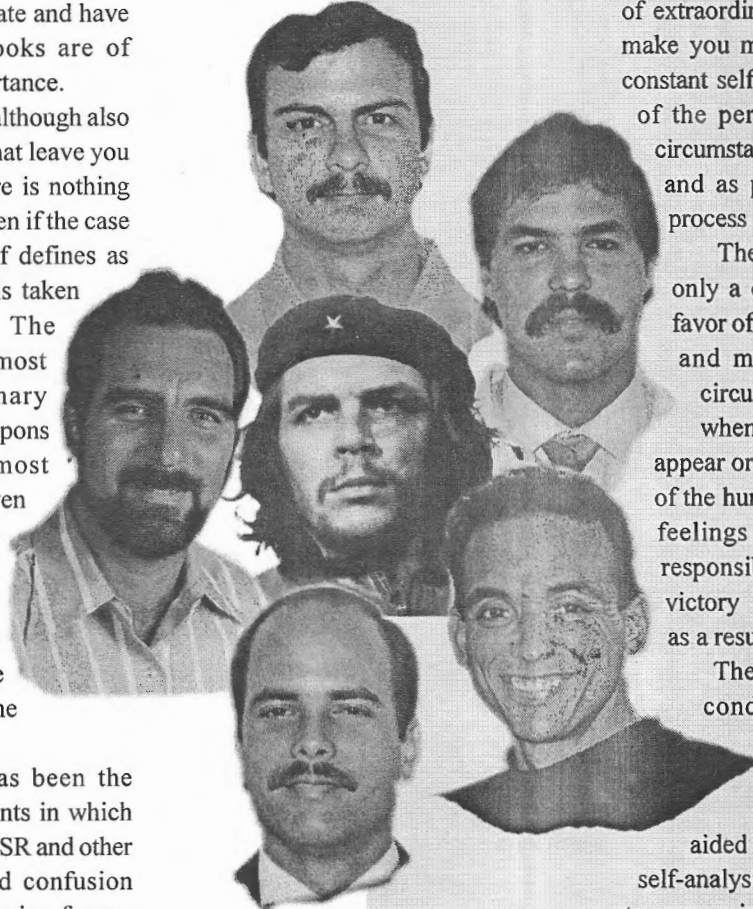
An evidence of it has been the Cuban resistance in moments in which the disappearance of the USSR and other socialist countries created confusion among the world's progressive forces, including many who called themselves communists.

Two other elements stand out clearly in those two books that have great current importance and very valuable practical significance. They also contribute to a better understanding of our revolutionary process.

The first of them refers to the ethics that has accompanied the Revolution since its origin, from the times in which they were a group of twelve guerrilla fighters with seven rifles and even before that. When in the midst of the preparations in Mexico for the Granma expedition a group of future expeditionaries is arrested and Che asks

Fidel not to stop the preparations and the expedition for his sake, Fidel answers him: "I will not abandon you". That ethics has been a permanent part of the revolutionary process.

It is the same ethics that was maintained during the insurrection, as



the book shows, in the treatment given to the peasants of the Sierra, to the military who were arrested, to the men of Batista wounded in the battles as well as in all the decisions taken as part of the process of negotiations with other political forces until the 26 of July Movement and particularly the guerrilla took over the Revolution's political leadership at national level.

The other element that draws attention in both of Che's books is the sharp analysis of the author in his evaluations of the political and moral condition of the guerrilla and of all the actors of the process, both in the Cuban experience and in Congo.

In the critical analyses made by Che one may appreciate his definition of a true revolutionary, his vision of the revolutionary in the process of evolution both in his development and in his regression when it occurred.

They are experiences and evaluations of extraordinary contemporariness that make you meditate on the need of a constant self-analysis, in the evaluation of the personal attitude under the circumstances you may find yourself and as part of the revolutionary process in general.

They teach you that it is not only a question of the attitude in favor of sacrifice and work, but also and mainly the attitude when circumstances are quite adverse, when the meanest attitudes may appear or the most honorable virtues of the human being – solidarity, the feelings of humanity, discipline, responsibility, loyalty and faith in victory – may impose themselves as a result of a strong will.

They also teach you that the conditions that make people revolutionaries do not accompany them eternally if they are not aided by that process of constant self-analysis. Humans are submitted to many influences and changing circumstances. They have personalities, interests and needs that modify themselves with time. It is not enough to consider oneself a revolutionary and be an integral part of the process by participating in the tasks that correspond to each one of us and doing it well.

It is also a question of the personal self-analysis of one's own characteristics, of seeing oneself in the process of evolution and how one reacts in the face of each new circumstance, whether historical or personal, and if those reactions agree with that concept of a revolutionary explained by Che ■

Antonio

Déclimas for my people

I grew up in a Havana neighborhood
where a hill rests
in a bosom with the aroma
of a tobacco-growing father.
I come from a worker's home
where I shared my bread
and among loves I was filled
with kisses, laughter, surprises.
And from this wealth
I took some verses of Martí.
"I grew up where the sun shines
over the crest of the sugar cane
and where in the steep mountain
a child studies lessons.
Where even the Zunzún¹

understands
what is homeland and freedom.
Where equality is found
even in the house made of palms
and where justice and kindness
go hand in hand.
There my life is filled
with brotherly values,
and when I take leave of my flowers
I do not fear leaving.
As I bade farewell, I didn't forget
a lesson
the day I left and I carried
in my light baggage
the courage of Camilo
together with the star of Che"

Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez

¹ A small bird endemic to Cuba

Che's example

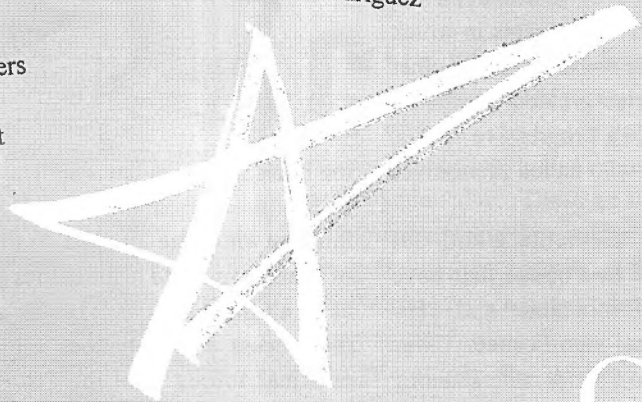
Guerrilla fighter of a cause
I champion, let me tell you
that all you taught
served me well.

All you taught –
resolute will,
impenetrable candor
a star well-chosen,

courage to trust,
a look of the greatest assurance
hope, valor,
love and happiness.

Guerrilla fighter of my sweetest
dreams beyond view.
We continue on the path
of irreversible victory.

September 2nd, 2002
Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez



Che

and the beginning of a new life for the poverty-stricken continent.

And I felt renewed by the Bolivian Che of Ñancahuazú, fierce liberator of our Latin American lands and symbol of rebellion for the entire planet. Che accompanied me through all those years, even in the bowels of the Empire.

And he was with us on that difficult September 12, 1998, the day of our arrest. Following his example, we already knew how to act and what to do. His immortal words give us life: *What do sacrifices of humans or peoples matter when the destiny of humankind is at stake?* Even at the very moment we were taken away, his words were with us: *if my time comes*

under other skies, my last thoughts will be for this people and especially for you.

Even before the imminence of his own death, after seeing Willy Cuba and Aniceto Reynaga murdered, he only spoke of the honor of his brothers: *They were brave men.*

During those years in prison, with him in my soul, I never had doubts, nor the slightest anxiety for any reason. He had already laid down my path.

I remember now that the first photo that my wife, Elizabeth Palmeiro, sent me in prison was one of Che. She knew very well all that he meant for me and that we needed to have him with us. On the back of the photo she wrote, "My

eyes and heart see you in his image." What she didn't know was that day, after reading her note, I was the proudest man in the world.

If with all of my life and my work, I can get just a little bit closer to the immense figure of the Heroic Guerrilla, I could then say with all my pride as a man and a revolutionary, that my dream has come true and the watchword that took root in the soul of that little child has yielded its fruit: We will be like Che!

Che is life, combat, a symbol, and most importantly, the FUTURE! ■

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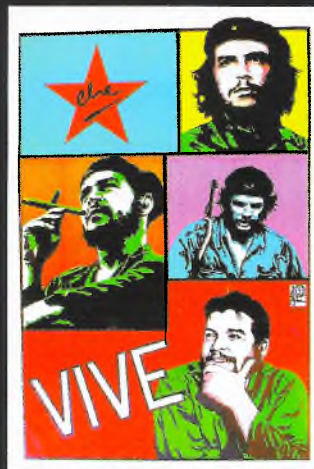
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XXI Aniversario de la caída del Che

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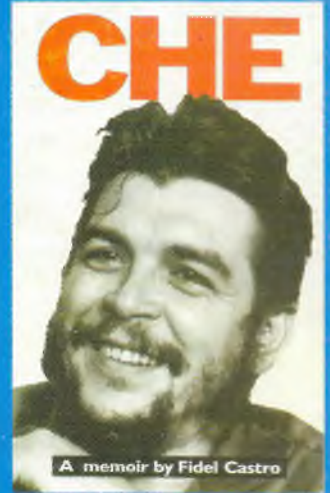
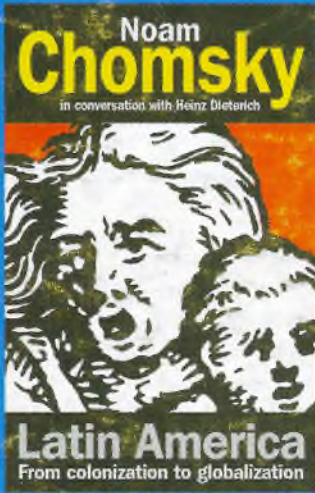
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Homenaje organizado por artistas de Buenos Aires Chile (Luisman - Valtierra)





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