

2 THE AWAKENING OF LATIN AMERICA

the National Bank. In February 1961 he became minister of industry. He was also a central leader of the political organization that in 1965 became the Communist Party of Cuba.

Apart from these responsibilities, Guevara represented the Cuban revolutionary government around the world, heading numerous delegations and speaking at the United Nations and other international forums in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the socialist bloc countries. He earned a reputation as a passionate and articulate spokesperson for Third World peoples, most famously at the 1961 conference at Punta del Este in Uruguay, where he denounced US President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress.

As had been his intention since joining the Cuban revolutionary movement, Guevara left Cuba in April 1965, initially to lead a Cuban-organized guerrilla mission to support the revolutionary struggle in the Congo, Africa. He returned to Cuba secretly in December 1965 to prepare another Cuban-organized guerrilla force for Bolivia. Arriving in Bolivia in November 1966, Guevara's plan was to challenge that country's military dictatorship and eventually to instigate a revolutionary movement that would extend throughout the continent of Latin America. The journal he kept during the Bolivian campaign became known as *The Bolivian Diary*. Che was wounded and captured by US-trained and run Bolivian counterinsurgency troops on October 8, 1967. The following day he was executed and his body hidden.

Che Guevara's remains were finally discovered in 1997 and returned to Cuba. A memorial was built at Santa Clara in central Cuba, where he had won a major military battle during the revolutionary war.

Chronology of Ernesto Che Guevara

June 14, 1928 Ernesto Guevara is born in Rosario, Argentina, of parents Ernesto Guevara Lynch and Celia de la Serna; he will be the eldest of five children.

January–July 1952 Ernesto Guevara travels around Latin America with his friend Alberto Granado.

March 10, 1952 General Fulgencio Batista carries out a coup d'état in Cuba.

July 6, 1953 After graduating as a doctor in March, Ernesto Guevara sets off again to travel through Latin America. He visits Bolivia, observing the aftermath of the 1952 revolution in that country.

July 26, 1953 Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful armed attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, launching the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Batista regime.

December 1953 Ernesto Guevara meets a group of Cuban survivors of the Moncada attack in San José, Costa Rica.

December 24, 1953 Ernesto Guevara arrives in Guatemala, then under the popularly elected government of Jacobo Árbenz.

January–June 1954 While in Guatemala, he studies Marxism and becomes involved in political activities, meeting exiled Cuban revolutionaries.

August 1954 Mercenary troops backed by the CIA enter Guatemala City and begin massacring Árbenz supporters.

September 21, 1954 Ernesto Guevara arrives in Mexico City after fleeing Guatemala. He gets a job at the Central Hospital.

July 1955 Ernesto Guevara meets Fidel Castro soon after the latter arrives in exile in Mexico City after his release from prison in Cuba. He immediately

4 THE AWAKENING OF LATIN AMERICA

agrees to join the planned guerrilla expedition to Cuba. The Cubans nickname him "Che," an Argentine term of greeting.

June 24, 1956 Che is arrested as part of a roundup by Mexican police of exiled Cuban revolutionaries.

November 25, 1956 Eighty-two combatants, including Che Guevara as troop doctor, set sail for Cuba from Tuxpan, Mexico, aboard the small cabin cruiser *Granma*.

December 2, 1956 The *Granma* reaches Cuba at Las Coloradas beach in Oriente province, but the rebels are surprised by Batista's troops at Alegría de Pío and dispersed.

December 21, 1956 Che's group (led by Juan Almeida) reunites with Fidel Castro and his group, and they move deeper into the Sierra Maestra mountains.

February 17, 1957 *New York Times* journalist Herbert Matthews interviews Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. The same day, the first meeting is held between the urban underground and the guerrillas of the July 26 Movement since the start of the revolutionary war.

March 13, 1957 A group of students from the Revolutionary Directorate attack the Presidential Palace and seize a major Havana radio station. Student leader José Antonio Echeverría is killed in this attack.

May 27–28, 1957 The battle of El Uvero takes place, in which Che Guevara stands out among the combatants.

July 12, 1957 The rebels issue the Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra calling for a broad political front against General Batista and support for the Rebel Army.

July 21, 1957 Che Guevara is selected to lead the newly established second column (Column Four) of the Rebel Army and is promoted to the rank of commander.

August 31, 1958 Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos lead invasion columns west from the Sierra Maestra toward central Cuba, opening new battle fronts in Las Villas province.

November 15, 1958 Fidel leaves the Sierra Maestra to direct the Rebel Army's

final offensive in Santiago de Cuba. By the end of the month, Batista's elite troops are defeated at the battle of Guisa.

December 28, 1958 Che Guevara's Column Eight initiates the battle of Santa Clara and succeeds in taking control of the city within a few days.

January 1, 1959 Batista flees Cuba. Fidel enters Santiago de Cuba as the military regime collapses. Santa Clara falls to the Rebel Army.

January 2, 1959 Fidel Castro calls for a general strike and the country is paralyzed. The Rebel Army columns led by Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos reach Havana.

January 8, 1959 Fidel Castro arrives in Havana.

February 9, 1959 Che Guevara is declared a Cuban citizen.

June 12–September 8, 1959 Che Guevara travels through Europe, Africa, and Asia; he signs various commercial, technical, and cultural agreements on behalf of the revolutionary government.

October 7, 1959 Che Guevara is designated head of the Department of Industry of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

November 25, 1959 Che Guevara is appointed president of the National Bank of Cuba.

March 17, 1960 President Eisenhower approves a CIA plan to overthrow the revolutionary government and to train a Cuban exile army to invade Cuba.

October 21, 1960 Che Guevara leaves on an extended visit to the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, China and North Korea.

January 3, 1961 Washington breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba.

February 23, 1961 The revolutionary government establishes the Ministry of Industry, headed by Che Guevara.

April 16, 1961 At a mass rally Fidel Castro proclaims the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

April 17–19, 1961 One thousand five hundred Cuban-born mercenaries, organized and backed by the United States, invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs

but are defeated within 72 hours. Che Guevara is sent to command troops in Pinar del Río province.

August 8, 1961 Che Guevara condemns US President Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" in a fiery speech to the Organization of American States (OAS) Economic and Social Conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, as head of Cuba's delegation. Cuba is subsequently expelled from the OAS.

February 3, 1962 President Kennedy orders a total trade embargo against Cuba.

August 27–September 7, 1962 Che Guevara makes his second visit to the Soviet Union.

October 1962 An international crisis breaks out after US spy planes discover Soviet missile installations in Cuba. Cuba responds by mobilizing its population for defense. Che Guevara is assigned to lead forces in Pinar del Río province in preparation for an imminent US invasion.

July 3–17, 1963 Che Guevara visits Algeria, recently independent under the government of Ahmed Ben Bella.

March 1964 Che Guevara meets with Tamara Bunke ("Tania") to discuss her mission to move to Bolivia in anticipation of a future guerrilla expedition.

March 25, 1964 Che Guevara addresses the UN Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, Switzerland.

November 4–9, 1964 Che Guevara visits the Soviet Union.

December 11, 1964 Che Guevara addresses the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, condemning the US war in Vietnam and supporting independence movements from Puerto Rico to the Congo.

December 17, 1964 Che Guevara leaves New York for Africa, where he visits Algeria, Mali, Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea, Ghana, Tanzania and Egypt.

February 24, 1965 Che Guevara addresses the Second Economic Seminar of the Organization of Afro-Asian Solidarity in Algiers, controversially urging the socialist countries to do more to support Third World struggles for independence.

March 14, 1965 Che Guevara returns to Cuba and shortly afterwards drops from public view.

April 1, 1965 Che Guevara delivers a farewell letter to Fidel Castro. He subsequently leaves Cuba on a Cuban-sponsored internationalist mission in the Congo, Africa, entering through Tanzania.

April 18, 1965 In answer to questions about Che Guevara's whereabouts, Fidel Castro tells foreign reporters that Che "will always be where he is most useful to the revolution."

June 16, 1965 Fidel Castro announces Che Guevara's location will be revealed "when Commander Guevara wants it known."

October 3, 1965 Fidel Castro publicly reads Che Guevara's letter of farewell at a meeting to announce the central committee of the newly formed Communist Party of Cuba.

November 21, 1965 Che Guevara leaves the Congo, and begins writing up his account of the African mission, which he describes as a "failure."

December 1965 Fidel Castro arranges for Che Guevara to return to Cuba in secret. Che Guevara prepares for a Cuban-sponsored guerrilla expedition to Bolivia.

January 3-14, 1966 The Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is held in Havana.

March 1966 The first Cuban combatants arrive in Bolivia to begin advance preparations for a guerrilla movement. Tania has already been working there since 1964.

July 1966 Che Guevara meets with Cuban volunteers selected for the mission to Bolivia at a training camp in Cuba's Pinar del Río province.

November 4, 1966 Che Guevara arrives in La Paz, Bolivia, in disguise, using the assumed name of Ramón Benítez.

November 7, 1966 Che Guevara and several others arrive at the farm on the Ñacahuazú River where the guerrilla detachment will be based. Che makes his first entry in his diary of the Bolivia campaign.

December 31, 1966 Che Guevara meets with the secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, Mario Monje. There is disagreement over perspectives for the planned guerrilla movement.

March 23, 1967 The first guerrilla military action takes place in a successful ambush of Bolivian Army troops.

March 25, 1967 The formation of the Bolivian National Liberation Army (ELN) is publicly announced.

April 16, 1967 Publication of Che Guevara's "Message to the Tricontinental," which calls for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams."

May 1967 US Special Forces arrive in Bolivia to train counterinsurgency troops of the Bolivian Army.

June 23-24, 1967 The Bolivian Army massacres miners and their families at the Siglo XX mines. This becomes known as the San Juan massacre.

July 1, 1967 President Barrientos publicly announces Che Guevara's presence in Bolivia.

July 31-August 10, 1967 The Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) conference is held in Havana. The conference supports guerrilla movements throughout Latin America. Che Guevara is elected honorary chair.

September 26, 1967 The guerrilla unit falls into a Bolivian Army ambush at Quebrada de Batán, near La Higuera.

October 8, 1967 The remaining 17 guerrillas are trapped by army troops and conduct a desperate battle in the Quebrada del Yuro (El Yuro ravine). Che Guevara is seriously wounded and captured.

October 9, 1967 Che Guevara and two other captured guerrillas (Willy and Chino) are executed by Bolivian soldiers following instructions from the Bolivian government and Washington. The remains of Che Guevara and the other guerrillas are secretly buried in Bolivia.

October 15, 1967 In a television appearance Fidel Castro confirms news of Che Guevara's death and declares three days of official mourning in Cuba. October 8 is designated the Day of the Heroic Guerrilla.

October 18, 1967 Fidel Castro delivers a memorial speech for Che Guevara in Havana's Revolution Plaza before an audience of almost one million people.

July 1968 Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary* is published in Cuba and distributed free of charge to the Cuban people. It is simultaneously published in many countries to counter the CIA campaign to discredit the revolutionary movement in Latin America. With an introduction by Fidel Castro, it becomes an instant international bestseller.

July 1997 Che Guevara's remains are finally located and returned to Cuba to be buried along with the bodies of other guerrilla fighters found in Bolivia in a new memorial built in Santa Clara.