

6 *Che Guevara Reader*

- A bibliography of Guevara's published writings and speeches, which provides an overview of his broad political responsibilities, interests and activities in the years 1958-67.
- A glossary of the names of many individuals, organizations and publications referred to in the text.

These annotations will help readers to place Guevara's writings in the appropriate political and historical context.

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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 oldest of five children.

1945 Guevara family moves to Buenos Aires.

1945-51 Ernesto Guevara is enrolled at medical school in Buenos Aires.

January-July 1952 Guevara visits Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. While in Peru he works in a leper colony treating patients.

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

March 1953 Guevara graduates as a doctor.

July 6, 1953 After graduating, Guevara travels throughout Latin America. He visits Bolivia, observing the impact of the 1952 revolution.

July 26, 1953 Fidel Castro leads an armed attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, launching the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Batista regime. The attack fails and Batista's troops massacre more than 50 captured combatants. Castro and other survivors are soon captured and imprisoned.

December 1953 Guevara has first contact with a group of survivors of the Moncada attack in San José, Costa Rica.

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

January 4, 1954 Guevara meets Níco López, a veteran of the Moncada attack, in Guatemala City.

January-June 1954 Unable to find a medical position in Guatemala, Guevara obtains various odd jobs. He studies Marxism and becomes involved in political activities, meeting exiled Cuban revolutionaries.

June 17, 1954 Mercenary forces backed by the CIA invade Guatemala. Guevara volunteers to fight.

June 27, 1954 Arbenz resigns.

- August 1954** Mercenary troops enter Guatemala City and begin massacring supporters of the Arbenz regime; Guevara takes refuge in Argentine Embassy.
- September 21, 1954** Guevara arrives in Mexico City after fleeing Guatemala; subsequently gets job as doctor at Central Hospital.
- May 15, 1955** Fidel Castro and other Moncada survivors are freed from prison in Cuba due to a massive public campaign in defense of their civil rights.
- June 1955** Guevara encounters Níco López, who is also in Mexico City. Several days later López arranges a meeting for him with Raúl Castro.
- July 7, 1955** Fidel Castro arrives in Mexico with the goal of organizing an armed expedition to Cuba.
- July 1955** Guevara meets Fidel Castro and immediately enrolls as the third confirmed member of the future guerrilla expedition. Guevara subsequently becomes involved in training combatants, with the Cubans giving him the nickname "Che," an Argentine term of greeting.
- June 24, 1956** Guevara is arrested as part of a roundup by Mexican police of 28 expeditionaries, including Fidel Castro; Guevara is detained for 57 days.
- November 25, 1956** Eighty-two combatants, including Guevara as doctor, sail for Cuba aboard the small cabin cruiser *Granma*, leaving from Tuxpan in Mexico.
- November 30, 1956** Frank País leads uprising in Santiago de Cuba, timed to coincide with scheduled arrival of *Granma* expeditionaries.
- December 2, 1956** *Granma* reaches Cuba at Las Coloradas beach in Oriente Province.
- December 5, 1956** The rebel combatants are surprised by Batista's troops at Alegría de Pío and dispersed. A majority of the guerrillas are either murdered or captured; Guevara is wounded.
- December 21, 1956** Guevara's group reunites with Fidel Castro; at this point there are 15 fighters in the Rebel Army.
- January 17, 1957** Rebel Army overruns an army outpost in the battle of La Plata.
- January 22, 1957** Rebel Army ambushes government column at Arroyo del Infierno.

- March 13, 1957** Fighters from the Revolutionary Directorate attack the Presidential Palace in Havana; attack fails and a number of students are killed, including José Antonio Echeverría.
- May 27–28, 1957** Battle of El Uvero takes place in the Sierra Maestra, with a major victory for the Rebel Army as it captures a well-fortified army garrison.
- July 1957** Rebel Army organizes a second column. Guevara is selected to lead it and is promoted to the rank of commander.
- April 9, 1958** July 26 Movement calls for a general strike throughout Cuba; strike fails.
- May 24, 1958** Batista launches an all-out military offensive against the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra. The offensive eventually fails.
- July 1958** Battle of El Jigüe; decisive Rebel Army victory marks beginning of Rebel counteroffensive.
- August 31, 1958** Guevara leads an invasion column from the Sierra Maestra toward Las Villas Province in central Cuba, and days later signs the Pedrero Pact with the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, which had a strong guerrilla base there. Several days earlier Camilo Cienfuegos had been ordered to lead another column toward Pinar del Río Province on the western end of Cuba.
- October 16, 1958** The Rebel Army column led by Guevara arrives in the Escambray Mountains.
- December 1958** Rebel columns of Guevara and the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, and Cienfuegos with a small guerrilla troop of the Popular Socialist Party, capture a number of towns in Las Villas Province and effectively cut the island in half.
- December 28, 1958** Guevara's column begins the battle of Santa Clara, the capital of Las Villas.
- January 1, 1959** Batista flees Cuba. A military junta takes over. Fidel Castro opposes the new junta and calls for the revolutionary struggle to continue. Santa Clara falls to the Rebel Army. Guevara and Cienfuegos are ordered immediately to Havana.
- January 2, 1959** Cuban workers respond to Fidel Castro's call for a general strike and the country is paralyzed. The Rebel Army columns of Guevara and Cienfuegos arrive in Havana. Guevara's

- column occupies La Cabaña fortress, a former bastion of Batista's army.
- January 5, 1959** Manuel Urrutia, the designated choice of the July 26 Movement, assumes presidency.
- January 8, 1959** Fidel Castro arrives in Havana, greeted by hundreds of thousands of people.
- February 9, 1959** Guevara is declared a Cuban citizen in recognition of his contribution to Cuba's liberation.
- February 16, 1959** Fidel Castro becomes prime minister.
- February 27, 1959** Revolutionary government approves law reducing electricity rates.
- March 6, 1959** Revolutionary government approves law reducing rents by 30–50 percent.
- March 1959** Revolutionary government outlaws racial discrimination.
- May 17, 1959** Proclamation of the first agrarian reform law, fixing legal holdings at a maximum of 1,000 acres and distributing land to peasants.
- June 12–September 8, 1959** Guevara travels through Europe, Africa and Asia; signs a number of commercial, technical and cultural agreements.
- July 16–17, 1959** Castro resigns as Prime Minister because of government crisis stemming from Urrutia's opposition to revolution's measures; in response, a massive popular outpouring forces Urrutia to resign from presidency and he is replaced by Osvaldo Dorticós.
- July 26, 1959** Castro returns to post as Prime Minister.
- October 7, 1959** Guevara is designated head of the Department of Industry of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).
- October 21, 1959** Following an attempt to initiate a counter-revolutionary uprising, Huber Matos, military commander of Camagüey Province, is arrested by army chief of staff Camilo Cienfuegos.
- October 26, 1959** Announcement of creation of National Revolutionary Militias, to incorporate thousands of workers and peasants into the fight against counterrevolution.
- October 28, 1959** Camilo Cienfuegos's plane goes down over sea. Cienfuegos is lost at sea.

- November 26, 1959 Guevara is appointed president of the National Bank of Cuba.
- March 4, 1960 *La Coubre*, a French ship carrying Belgian arms, explodes in Havana harbor as a result of sabotage, killing 81 people; at a mass rally the following day, Fidel Castro proclaims the slogan of the Cuban revolution: "Patria or muerte!"
- March 17, 1960 President Eisenhower orders the CIA to begin preparation of Cuban exile army to invade Cuba.
- May 8, 1960 Cuba and the Soviet Union establish diplomatic relations.
- June 29–July 1, 1960 Revolutionary government nationalizes Texaco, Esso and Shell refineries following their refusal to refine petroleum purchased by Cuba from the Soviet Union.
- July 6, 1960 Eisenhower orders reduction by 700,000 tons of sugar that the United States has agreed to purchase from Cuba.
- July 9, 1960 Soviet Union announces that it will purchase all Cuban sugar that the United States refuses to buy.
- August 6, 1960 In response to U.S. economic aggression, the Cuban government decrees the nationalization of major U.S. companies in Cuba.
- October 13, 1960 Revolutionary government nationalizes Cuban and foreign-owned banks as well as 382 large Cuban-owned industries.
- October 14, 1960 Urban reform law approved, nationalizing housing; Cubans are guaranteed the right to their dwellings.
- October 19, 1960 U.S. government decrees a partial embargo of trade with Cuba.
- October 21, 1960 Fusion of revolutionary youth movements into Association of Young Rebels. Guevara leaves on extended visit to Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, China and North Korea.
- October 24, 1960 Cuban government nationalizes remaining U.S. companies in Cuba.
- January 3, 1961 Washington breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba.
- January 6, 1961 Guevara reports to Cuban people on economic agreements signed with Soviet Union and other countries.

- January 17, 1961** U.S. government imposes ban on travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba.
- February 23, 1961** Ministry of Industry established, headed by Guevara.
- March 31, 1961** President Kennedy abolishes Cuba's sugar quota.
- April 15, 1961** As a prelude to planned invasion by U.S.-organized mercenary army, planes attack Santiago de Cuba and Havana.
- April 16, 1961** At a mass rally to honor the victims of the previous day's attacks, Fidel Castro proclaims socialist character of the Cuban revolution; Cuba is put on alert in anticipation of the impending attack.
- April 17-19, 1961** 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries, organized and backed by the United States, invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The aim was to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. They are defeated within 72 hours, with the last ones surrendering at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which has come to be the name used by the Cubans for the battle. Guevara is sent to command troops in Pinar del Río Province.
- August 8, 1961** Guevara delivers speech to Organization of American States (OAS) Economic and Social Conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, as head of Cuba's delegation.
- December 22, 1961** Cuba completes year-long nationwide literacy campaign.
- January 31, 1962** OAS votes to expel Cuba.
- February 3, 1962** President Kennedy orders total embargo on U.S. trade with Cuba.
- March 8, 1962** National Directorate of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) is established, based on fusion of the July 26 Movement, Popular Socialist Party and Revolutionary Directorate; Guevara is a member of the National Directorate.
- August 27-September 7, 1962** Guevara makes second visit to the Soviet Union.
- October 22, 1962** President Kennedy initiates the "Cuban Missile Crisis," denouncing Cuba's acquisition of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads for defense against U.S. attack. Washington imposes a naval blockade on Cuba. Cuba responds

by mobilizing its population for defense. Guevara is assigned to lead forces in Pinar del Río Province in preparation for an imminent U.S. invasion.

October 28, 1962 Soviet Premier Khrushchev agrees to remove Soviet missiles in exchange for U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba.

1963 United Party of Socialist Revolution (PURS) is formed; Guevara is a member of its National Directorate.

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

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

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

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

December 9, 1964 Guevara leaves Cuba on a three-month state visit.

December 11, 1964 Guevara addresses the United Nations General Assembly.

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

February 24, 1965 Guevara addresses the Second Economic Seminar of the Organization of Afro-Asian Solidarity in Algiers.

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

April 1, 1965 Guevara delivers a farewell letter to Fidel Castro. He subsequently leaves Cuba on an internationalist mission in the Congo (now Zaire), entering through Tanzania. Guevara operates under the name Tatú, Swahili for “number two.”

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

June 16, 1965 Castro announces Guevara’s whereabouts will be revealed “when Commander Guevara wants it known.”

October 1, 1965 Communist Party of Cuba officially formed.

- October 3, 1965** Castro publicly reads Guevara's letter of farewell at a meeting to announce the Central Committee of the newly formed Communist Party of Cuba.
- December 1965** Castro arranges for Guevara to return to Cuba in secret. Guevara prepares for an expedition to Bolivia.
- January 3-14, 1966** Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is held in Havana.
- March 1966** Arrival in Bolivia of the first Cuban combatants to begin advance preparations for a guerrilla detachment.
- July 1966** 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** Guevara arrives in Bolivia in disguise and using an assumed name.
- November 7, 1966** Guevara arrives at site where Bolivian guerrilla movement will be based; first entry in Bolivian diary.
- November-December 1966** More guerrilla combatants arrive and base camps are established.
- December 31, 1966** Guevara meets with Bolivian Communist Party secretary Mario Monje. There is disagreement over perspectives for the planned guerrilla expedition.
- February 1-March 20, 1967** Guerrilla detachment leaves the base camp to explore the region.
- March 23, 1967** First guerrilla military action takes place with combatants successfully ambushing a Bolivian army column.
- April 10, 1967** Guerrilla column conducts a successful ambush of Bolivian troops.
- April 16, 1967** Publication of Guevara's Message to the Tricontinental with his call for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams."
- April 17, 1967** Guerrilla detachment led by Joaquín is separated from the rest of the unit. The separation is supposed to last only three days but the two groups are unable to reunite.
- April 20, 1967** Régis Debray is arrested after having spent several weeks with a guerrilla unit. He is subsequently tried and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment.
- May 1967** U.S. Special Forces arrive in Bolivia to train counterinsurgency troops of the Bolivian army.

- July 6, 1967** Guerrillas occupy the town of Sumaipata.
- July 26, 1967** Guevara gives a speech to guerrillas on the significance of the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada garrison.
- July 31–August 10, 1967** 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.
- August 4, 1967** Deserter leads the Bolivian army to the guerrillas' main supply cache; documents seized lead to arrest of key urban contacts.
- August 31, 1967** Joaquín's detachment is ambushed and annihilated while crossing a river after an informer leads government troops to the site.
- September 26, 1967** Guerrillas walk into an ambush. Three are killed and government forces encircle the remaining guerrilla forces.
- October 8, 1967** Remaining 17 guerrillas are trapped by Bolivian troops and conduct a desperate battle. Guevara is seriously wounded and captured.
- October 9, 1967** Guevara and two other captured guerrillas are murdered following instructions from the Bolivian government and Washington.
- October 15, 1967** In a television appearance Fidel Castro confirms news of Guevara's death and declares three days of official mourning in Cuba. October 8 is designated Day of the Heroic Guerrilla.
- October 18, 1967** Castro delivers memorial speech for Guevara in Havana's Revolution Plaza before an audience of almost one million people.
- February 22, 1968** Three Cuban survivors cross border into Chile, after having traveled across the Andes on foot to elude Bolivian army. They later return to Cuba.
- Mid-March 1968** Microfilm of Guevara's Bolivian diary arrives in Cuba.
- July 1, 1968** Guevara's Bolivian diary published in Cuba is distributed free of charge to the Cuban people. The introduction is by Fidel Castro.

