

**Man, Myth, and Icon:  
The Life and Legacy of Che Guevara**

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**Historical Paper**

**Paper Length: 2,498 words**

*“Why did they think that by killing him, he would cease to exist as a fighter? Today he is in every place, wherever there is a just cause to defend. His unerasable mark is now in history and his luminous gaze of a prophet has become a symbol for all the poor of this world.”<sup>1</sup>*

-Fidel Castro

In October of 1997, a full thirty years after his capture and death, Che Guevara’s remains were finally returned to Cuba, where Castro addressed a crowd of thousands atop a vast mausoleum built in his honor. “Today he is in every place.” The speech was followed by a twenty-one cannon salute in both Havana and Santa Clara, air raid sirens blaring all across the island and a chorus of reverent schoolchildren singing to Che’s memory.<sup>2</sup> Castro’s words rang hauntingly true.

A champion of the working poor and oppressed, Che Guevara was a Marxist revolutionary and an instrumental player in the Cuban Revolution. As one of the most influential and controversial figures of the twentieth century, Che has been characterized on every spot of the continuum from romantic intellectual to cold-blooded executioner. His iconic image, *Guerrillero Heroico*, has become the ubiquitous symbol of rebellion worldwide, and he himself has been solidified in history as the ultimate face of martyrdom and dissent. A leader during his lifetime and a legend after his death, Guevara’s legacy as a global countercultural icon transcended his political roots to shape the social, political and cultural landscapes of the world long after his demise.

### **Life and Death**

Ernesto “Che” Guevara was born on June 14, 1928, to a middle-class Argentine family. Even in his youth Guevara was a passionate and restless spirit, so much so that his father

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<sup>1</sup> The Associated Press, “Guevara’s remains finally at rest,” *The Register-Guard*, 18 October 1997, news.google.com, (10 January 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

announced the first thing to note about his son was that “in [his] veins flowed the blood of Irish rebels.”<sup>3</sup> In school, he not only excelled in athletics despite his asthma but also displayed an astounding natural affinity and passion for philosophy, mathematics, engineering, poetry, history and political science.<sup>4</sup> Decades later, in fact, a patronizing, declassified CIA report took note of this and described him as “quite well read” and “fairly intellectual for a Latino.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1951, Guevara — now a medical student at the University of Buenos Aires — took a nine-month expedition through South America with his friend Alberto Granado.<sup>6</sup> He later reflected that this trip brought him into close contact with “poverty, hunger and disease...to the point that a father can accept the loss of a son as an unimportant accident,”<sup>7</sup> instilling him with the beginnings of his revolutionary ideals. By the end of his journey, Guevara came to see the nations of the continent as a single entity united in the front of capitalist oppression. A coup of the Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz assisted by CIA-backed rebels three years later ultimately convinced him that the only solution to Latin America’s problems was through armed revolt.<sup>8</sup>

Thoroughly radicalized, Guevara found himself in Mexico City in September of 1954, where he met brothers Raul and Fidel Castro.<sup>9</sup> A political exile at the time, Fidel was the head of the revolutionary 26th of July Movement that sought to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio

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<sup>3</sup> Ernesto Guevara Lynch, *Young Che: Memories of Che Guevara By His Father* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Nick Caistor, *Che Guevara: A Life* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2010), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Steel, “However debased the image, Che’s legend lives on,” *The Independent*, 10 October 2007, <http://www.independent.co.uk>, (10 January 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Ernesto Che Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes On A Latin American Journey* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Che Guevara, “On Revolutionary Medicine,” trans. Brian Baggins, Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1960/08/19.htm>, (12 January 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Caistor, 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

Batista in Cuba. Seeing a chance to strike a blow back at the right-wing tyranny he so detested, Guevara joined their cause immediately.<sup>10</sup>

Che went on to play a major role in the Cuban Revolution that followed. Tracked down and attacked by Batista's military forces, the initial team of 82 revolutionaries fell apart, leaving Guevara and the small band of survivors to regroup in the Sierra Maestra.<sup>11</sup> In the mountains, Guevara set up factories to make grenades, organized schools to teach the illiterate, established health clinics to treat the wounded, and created workshops to teach recruits guerilla strategy.<sup>12</sup> Dubbed three years later by *Time Magazine* as "Castro's brain," Guevara — initially only the army's medic — was soon promoted to Castro's second-in-command.<sup>13</sup> Led by his guerilla tactics, the team of at times less than 200 revolutionaries waged successful battles against Batista's army of 37,000. Near the end of the war, Guevara was assigned to capture the strategic city of Santa Clara. Outnumbered nearly ten to one, he and his men pulled off the single largest victory in the Cuban Revolution, ousting Batista on January 1, 1959, to bring an end to the revolution.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after Castro's triumph, Guevara was named commander of the La Cabaña prison, where he oversaw the executions of war criminals, Batista loyalists and other individuals considered enemies of the revolution.<sup>15</sup> Over the next five years, he held numerous other pivotal government positions, from Minister of Industry to head of the Cuban Bank.<sup>16</sup> A fully established Marxist-Leninist, Guevara advocated for individuals to take on the values of the "*el Hombre*

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<sup>10</sup> Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1997), 179.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Annandale Sinclair, "Che Guevara: Argentine-Cuban revolutionary," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 12 December 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248399/Che-Guevara>, (20 January, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, 253-255.

<sup>13</sup> *Time Magazine*, "Castro's Brain." *Time Magazine*, 8 August 1960: 38, accessed 16 January 2015, EBSCOhost..

<sup>14</sup> "The Cuban Revolution of 1959," The Cold War Museum, <http://www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/TheCubanRevolutionof1959.asp>, (20 January 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, 387.

<sup>16</sup> Caistor, 72.

*Nuevo*,” or “New Man,” in order to become ultimately selfless, hard-working, gender-blind, non-materialistic and anti-imperialist members of a socialist society.<sup>17</sup> During his time in government, he spearheaded a successful national literacy campaign, instituted various agrarian land reforms, traveled as a Cuban diplomat and played a central role in the instruction of Cuban armed forces, including those that repelled the American Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961.<sup>18</sup> He grew increasingly disheartened, however, as Cuba became more and more of a client state for the Soviet Union, and after the Soviets removed their missiles without consulting Cuban leadership during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, he began denouncing them almost as frequently as he denounced Americans.<sup>19</sup> Disagreement over Soviet conditions and recommendations, among other feuds, ultimately led to a fallout between Guevara and Castro.<sup>20</sup>

Some argue Castro deliberately sent Guevara away on a “mission impossible”<sup>21</sup>; others believe Guevara himself simply grew disillusioned with government work and saw his ultimate role in life as a guerilla in the field.<sup>22</sup> Either way, in 1965, Guevara resigned from all government positions and dropped out of public life, traveling to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in hopes of spreading the revolution.<sup>23</sup> However, after the failure of an ultimately futile attempt to aid the the Maoist-inspired rebels in the ongoing civil war, he abandoned Africa for Bolivia, where he

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<sup>17</sup> Che Guevara, “Socialism and Man in Cuba.” trans. Brian Baggins, Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>, (15 January 2015).

<sup>18</sup> William Stodden, “Chronology of The Economic Ministry of Comrade Guevara after the Revolution in Cuba,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, 17 May 2000, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/biography/econ-ministry.htm> (9 April 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, 529.

<sup>20</sup> Simon Reid-Henry, *Fidel and Che: A Revolutionary Friendship* (New York, NY: Walker Publishing Company, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Thomas H. Lipscomb, “The Revised Che Guevara,” *The New York Times*, (26 November 1995): E3.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas Henderson, “Interview with Douglas Henderson,” Interview by Henry B. Ryan, *Library of Congress*, 23 September, 1990, 19, <http://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000505/> (3 April 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, 628.

established another guerrilla group near Santa Cruz.<sup>24</sup> This Bolivian “adventure”, as referenced by one of Guevara’s teammates, was intended to be a “proving ground” for his revolutionary theory of *focoism*; first developed during the Cuban Revolution, the concept relied on vanguards of fast, concentrated paramilitary groups to attack and provide focus (in Spanish, *foco*) and inspiration for a general insurrection later on.<sup>25</sup> While he achieved some initial combat success in early 1967, the tables turned quickly. Later that same year, on October 7, the CIA-backed Bolivian forces finally closed in on Che and his rebels, capturing them in a remote Andean village. Two days, one Bolivian high command order and nine bullet shots later, Che Guevara was dead.<sup>26</sup>

### Conflicting Legacies

Che’s personal legacy as a leader and a man has been intensely polarized in the decades following his death. As a commander during the Cuban Revolution, Che was notoriously feared for his ruthless brutality: a harsh disciplinarian, he often shot defectors and other men suspected of being informers, spies, or deserters without restraint. Simultaneously, he was irrefutably loyal in combat and action; Fidel Castro described him as an exemplary leader who held “great moral authority over his troops,” while his lieutenant noted that Che’s behavior in combat drew admiration from even enemies.<sup>27</sup> Tomas Alba, who fought under Che’s command, later stated, “Che was loved, in spite of being stern and demanding. We would [have given] our life for him.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “From Cuba to Congo, dream to disaster for Che Guevara,” *The Guardian*, 11 August 2000, theguardian.com, (18 January 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Paul L. Montgomery, “Che Guevara’s Last Stand?” *The New York Times* (8 October 1967): E4.

<sup>26</sup> Richard L. Harris, *Death of a Revolutionary: Che Guevara’s Last Mission* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970, 2000, 2007), 162.

<sup>27</sup> Saul Landau, “Poster Boy of the Revolution,” review of *The Life and Death of Che Guevara*, by Jorge G. Castaneda, *The Washington Post*, 19 October 1997, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/reviews/companero.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> Rosa Tania Valdes, “Cuba remembers Che Guevara 40 years after his fall.” *Reuters*, 8 October 2007, uk.reuters.com, (24 January 2015).

It is estimated anywhere between 55 to 105 people were executed during Che's term at the La Cabaña prison.<sup>29</sup> Conflicting views exist of his attitude towards the executions; some accounts report that he relished in the shootings, whereas others claim he pardoned as many prisoners as he could, with biographer Jon Lee Anderson even going as far as stating he had "yet to find a single credible source pointing to a case where Che executed an 'innocent.'"<sup>30</sup> Regardless, Che himself had no qualms in doing what he regarded as necessary for the revolution, asserting that the executions were "not only a necessity for the people of Cuba, but also an imposition of the people."<sup>31</sup>

Some are quick to point out the discrepancies between his personal ideology and the failed systems established under his leadership. Che has been widely lauded as a hero, with Nelson Mandela calling him an "inspiration for every human being who loves freedom" and Jean-Paul Sartre referring to him as "not only an intellectual but the most complete human being of our age."<sup>32</sup> However, while many adore, idolize and even sanctify him for his beliefs, others despise him for precisely the same reason. They deplore his inability to carry out successful reforms, categorize him as a murderer representative of a failed communist ideology, and criticize his handling of the Cuban economy, which collapsed in 1961 as a partial result of Che's failed "structural factors and management errors" as Minister of Industry.<sup>33</sup> In addition, critics often point out that the Cuban Missile Crisis was averted against his will; in a posthumously published interview with a British

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson, 387.

<sup>30</sup> Castaneda, Jorge G., *Companero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York, NY: Random House, 1998), 143-144.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, 375.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 468.

<sup>33</sup> Gerhard Dilger, review of *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, by Jon Lee Anderson, and *Che Guevara. Biographie*, by Jorge G. Castañeda, *Iberoamericana*, no. 11 (September 2003): 330, accessed 19 January 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41673340>.

journalist, Latin America's "most glamorous" revolutionary<sup>34</sup> expressed the supposed willingness of the Cuban people to "sacrifice itself to nuclear weapons, so that its ashes would have become the foundation of new social orders."<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, whatever his failures and successes were as a leader during his lifetime, Che's icon has long transcended his personal and political roots. The rise of the "Che myth" in the 1960's and 70's led to a wave of revolutions, rebellions, and reforms all around the world in no small part because of his death and martyrdom.

### **Inspiring Revolutions**

On March 5, 1960, photographer Alberto Korda snapped a single, off-hand frame of a young revolutionary gazing determinedly into the distance at a state funeral for a freighter explosion in Havana's harbor (see Appendix I).<sup>36</sup> This photo of the thirty-one-year-old Che Guevara went on to change the world.

Thanks to the wealth of other prominent figures at the funeral, Che's photo never made it into the newspaper the next day, and was never widely featured until his death in late 1967.<sup>37</sup> Its delayed global launch coincided perfectly with an era of reform ready for inspiration: a new generation of strong-willed, anti-establishment youth was rising up in rebellion across the industrialized west, while their counterparts in the third world were taking up arms in hopes of recreating the revolution in Cuba.<sup>38</sup> Just like that, Korda's Che — then dubbed "Guerrillero Heroico" (*Heroic Guerilla*) — became the defining icon of the generation.

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas L. Hughes, "Guevara's Death — the meaning for Latin America," *US Department of State*, 12 October 1967. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB5/docs/doc11.pdf> (9 April 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Dilger, 331.

<sup>36</sup> Richard Gott, "Poster Boy," *The Guardian*, 2 June 2006, [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), (3 January 2015).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Casey, 28.



After Che's death, the rise of Soviet influence in Cuba forced it to scale back regional support for Latin American revolutionary movements.<sup>39</sup> This, however, did nothing to deter young radicals who had long internalized the "Spirit of Che."<sup>40</sup> Hoping to repeat his revolution in Cuba, the National Liberation Army of Brazil attempted Che's tactics of guerilla warfare in the streets of Sao Paulo in 1969. Around the same time, the Tupamoros — a left-wing urban guerilla movement in Uruguay — enjoyed some degree of success in its political insurgency, rising to control parts of Montevideo in the early 70's. In Argentina, the leftist Montoneros attracted an active membership of over 7,000 university students to wage quasi-militaristic revolution against fascist José López Rega, even embracing the use of Guevara's *foco* military theory and adapting it to urban warfare.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, none of these movements achieved the same success as seen in Cuba. By 1970 the street fighters in Brazil had been all but wiped out by the military dictatorship; by 1973 Uruguay's Tupamoros were put to an official end by a military coup; and by 1976 the Montoneros of Che's own homeland of Argentina had collapsed in the hands of the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA).<sup>42</sup> Despite its Che-inspired ideology and spirit, Latin America was unable to assemble the coherence necessary for long-lasting revolution, and thus largely fell to a series of brutal dictatorships through the 70's and 80's.<sup>43</sup>

The key, however, lies in the fact that Che's image was used at all. As author Michael Casey declared, "wherever young people rise up, Korda's Che is there, crossing religious, ethnic, and even political divides with abandon."<sup>44</sup> At the peak of his visibility, the *New York Times* repeatedly tied Che to various Marxist social movements in Europe and the Americas, citing his

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<sup>39</sup> David Priestland, *The Red Flag: A History of Communism* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2009), 402.

<sup>40</sup> Castaneda, 280.

<sup>41</sup> Casey, 139.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> David Kunzle, *Che Guevara: Icon, Myth, Message*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Los Angeles, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> Casey, 31.

influence in protests in Spain, France, Germany, Brazil and the United States.<sup>45</sup> Most notably, Che's legacy was ubiquitously palpable in the worldwide protests of 1968. In its May 17, 1968 edition, *Time* observed that the Che legend had already given "rise to a cult of almost religious hero worship among radical intellectuals, workers and students" less than seven months after his death, "flourishing in the New Left."<sup>46</sup> In the United States, the year marked a turning point in the civil rights movement with the rise of the revolutionary Black Panther Party, a black nationalist and socialist movement that began stylizing themselves after Che and adopting his trademark black beret.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, Arab guerrillas began naming campaigns and combat operations after him.<sup>48</sup> "Che Vive!" posters were everywhere at anti-Vietnam War protests in the US and student riots in Europe, especially during the May 1968 events in France.<sup>49</sup> Caught in a period of severe civil unrest, France saw a sudden series of student occupation protests against capitalism, consumerism and other institutional values spread like wildfire through the nation, prompting strikes of over 11,000,000 workers — over 22% of the population at the time.<sup>50</sup> At the height of unrest, President Charles de Gaulle was even forced to leave the country in secret, shutting down the government for a few hours.<sup>51</sup> Although the strikes lasted no more than two weeks, "May '68" marked an important cultural, social and moral turning point in the country.

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<sup>45</sup> Jeff A. Larson and Omar Lizardo, "Generations, Identities, and the Collective Memory of Che Guevara," *Sociological Forum*, 22 no 4 (Dec. 2007): 425-451, accessed 9 April 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20110227>.

<sup>46</sup> "The Cult of Che," *Time Magazine*, 17 May 1968: 21, accessed 22 January 2015, EBSCOhost.

<sup>47</sup> "A Myth Embalmed in a Matrix of Ignorance," *Time Magazine*, 12 October 1970: 40, accessed 20 January 2015, EBSCOhost.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Priestland, 401.

<sup>50</sup> Swarthmore College, "French students and workers campaign for reform (May Revolt), 1968," Global Nonviolent Action Database, <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/french-students-and-workers-campaign-reform-may-revolt-1968>. Accessed 29 January 2015.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

Che's legacy continued transforming the world long after the events of the 60's and early 70's. More importantly, it spread to every corner of the globe, leaving lasting impressions to this day. During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, students displayed his icon on banners when they ousted the Shah, and again in 2011-12 he was featured prominently on posters during anti-government protests of the Arab Spring (see Appendix II).<sup>52</sup> In Latin America, his likeness can still be found anywhere and everywhere, from spray-painted graffiti on the walls to enormous eight-story bronze wire sculptures on the sides of buildings (see Appendix III).<sup>53</sup> Throughout the Middle East, guerrilla movements have been repeatedly tied to Che, and even Al-Qaeda has been accused of adopting Che's strategies of focoist warfare. As the 2008 documentary *Chevolution* notes, "[Che's] significance in modern times is less about the man and his specific history, and more about the ideals of creating a better society."<sup>54</sup> Che epitomized not only the desire for change, but the will to act, and thus has endured as a symbol for political and social revolution for decades.

### **Universal Appeal**

Perhaps most impressively of all, Che's icon today often has virtually nothing to do with Che himself. Not only has the image outstripped its original history, it has shed all political and ideological meaning in many contexts. By the twenty-first century, the world had long transformed Che into a pop culture icon, a "rock-hero biker revolutionary" and a "James Dean in fatigues."<sup>55</sup> As the *Washington Post* reports, "Ernesto "Che" Guevara is adored. He is loathed. Dead for nearly 40 years, he is everywhere - as much a cultural icon as James Dean or Marilyn Monroe, perhaps even more so among a new generation of admirers who've helped turn a devout Marxist into a

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<sup>52</sup> Casey, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Kunzle, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Luis Lopez and Trisha Ziff, *Chevolution* [Video], retrieved 30 January 2015, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn3Ua8kPvhc&noredirect=1>.

<sup>55</sup> Isabel Hilton, "Still a Messiah?" *New Statesman*, 4 October 2007, newstatesman.com, accessed 25 January 2015.

capitalist commodity.”<sup>56</sup> He appears universally in advertising and merchandising, and is used to market everything from perfume in Venezuelan malls to liquor in Italian wine shops.<sup>57</sup> Put simply in the words of a Cuban shop clerk, “He sells.”<sup>58</sup> In the most ironic twist of fate possible, Che’s image is now used to perpetuate the very culture and institution he died fighting: capitalist consumerism.

At the end of the day, Che Guevara is much more than just a revolutionary. Michael Casey noted that after the events of 1968, Che “became the quintessential postmodern icon,” signifying “anything to anyone and everything to everyone.”<sup>59</sup> Regardless of Che’s failures or contradictions as a person, the potency of his image continues to inspire. Beyond a Marxist revolutionary and a guerilla warrior, a political leader and a war hero, he has become a persisting symbol for counterculture and revolution through the generations. Che Guevara may not have managed to spark the worldwide communist revolution he wanted to, but his image, ideals, and legacy remain immortal.

Word Count: 2,498

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<sup>56</sup> Martha Irvine, “Che Guevara’s Iconic Image Endures,” *Washington Post*, 23 September 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>, accessed 24 January 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Casey, 149.

<sup>58</sup> Marc Lacey, “A Communist He Was, but Today, He Sells,” *The New York Times*, 9 October 2007: A4.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

## Appendix I



Korda's iconic *Guerillero Heroico*, dubbed "the most famous photograph in the world" by the Maryland Institute College of Arts. From *Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image* by Michael Casey.

## Appendix II



Yemeni anti-government protesters holds up portraits of Che Guevara during a demonstration in Sanaa. From *The Telegraph*.

## Appendix III



8-story metal wire sculpture of Che Guevara on the side of the Cuban Ministry of Interior. The slogan under Guevara's image reads "Hasta la Victoria Siempre," or "Until the Everlasting Victory, Always." From *Reuters*.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Browne, Malcolm W. "Cult of Guevara Seems Alien in Interior of Bolivia." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), 26 May 1968: 18.

This New York Times article evaluated the reasons for Che's failure in Bolivia, citing specifically the isolation of the region he chose to fight in. While his popularity was very much growing in the United States at the time, Browne argues that the guerilla insurgency danger is over now in Bolivia and much of Latin America. I used this article to help me understand the various aspects of Che's legacy in Latin America.

Granado, Alberto. *Traveling With Che Guevara: The Making of a Revolution*. New York, NY: Newmarket Press, 1978, 2004.

This memoir about Che Guevara was written by a friend who had traveled with him through his youth in South America. It provided a unique insight into the radicalization and transformation of Guevara's character, and helped me evaluate Guevara as a man and a revolutionary even before he went on to Cuba.

Guevara, Che. "On Revolutionary Medicine." Translated by Brian Baggins. Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1960/08/19.htm>. Accessed 12 January 2015.

This source is an English transcript of one of Che's speeches to the Cuban Militia in 1960. Here he speaks of Cuba's future and the kind of society to build from the ashes of the revolution. He not only discusses political and social changes to implement, however, but also his own past, radicalization and experience in medicine, and thus helped me understand where he came from and what he wanted to inspire.

Guevara, Che. "Socialism and Man in Cuba." Translated by Brian Baggins. Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>. Accessed 15 January 2015.

This document is a translated letter from Che Guevara to the director of Uruguayan publication *Marcha* in 1965, written during his time in Africa. I used this source mainly to



understand the aims and purposes of the Cuban Revolution through the eyes of Guevara, and assess his goals for the rest of the world.

Guevara, Ernesto Che. *Self Portrait Che Guevara*. Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2004.

This book is a compilation of countless pictures from Che's life. It helped me get a visual understanding of the time period, the environment he grew up in and went through, and his character and attitude throughout his life.

Guevara, Ernesto Che. *The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes On A Latin American Journey*. Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2004.

Written by Guevara himself, *The Motorcycle Diaries* tracks his adventure through the Americas with his friend Alberto Granado in 1952. Only a 23-year-old medical student at the time, Guevara first witnessed the great injustices of the continent on this trip, marking the first step in his transformation into a radical and revolutionary. I found this book extremely insightful as it provided a lens into Guevara's youth and character that no other biographer could capture.

Guevara Lynch, Ernesto. *Young Che: Memories of Che Guevara By His Father*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2007.

This book is a memoir of Che Guevara by his father. Most importantly, it helped me understand the environment he came from, who he was as a child, and the factors that lead to his eventual desire for revolution. It was also very interesting for me to see that Guevara, despite his radical views, actually came from a comparatively affluent, middle-class white family with all the resources necessary to allow him to become whatever he wanted.

"Guevara: Man and Myth." *The New York Times*. 12 October 1967: L.

While most articles I used examined the rise of the Che myth *after* his death and perceived martyrdom, this one talked about the fall of both the man and the myth in Bolivia. This source provided a fresh perspective and a good contrast with many of the other articles I've seen.

"From Cuba to Congo, dream to disaster for Che Guevara." *The Guardian*, 11 August 2000. [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com). Accessed 18 January 2015.

This article reveals exclusive extracts from Che Guevara's previously unpublished diaries, including translated letters to Fidel Castro, notes detailing the resources and personnel necessary to fight in the Congo, and suspected reasons for failure. I used these extracts to gain an insight into the life of work of Guevara after his political height in Cuba.

Henderson, Douglas. "Interview with Douglas Henderson." Interview by Henry B. Ryan. *Library of Congress*, 23 September, 1990, 19. <http://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000505/>. Accessed 3 April 2015.

Douglas Henderson, the interviewee, was the United States Ambassador to Bolivia during Guevara's attempted insurgency and death in the country. His first-hand accounts of the passing events and reaction on the part of the Americans was extremely useful for providing perspective on what was one of the most controversial deaths at that point in time. I used the interview to examine Henderson's personal evaluations as an American diplomat.

Hughes, Thomas L. "Guevara's Death — the meaning for Latin America." *US Department of State*, 12 October 1967. Accessed 9 April 2015. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB5/docs/doc11.pdf>

In his report to the Secretary of State, Latin America specialist Thomas Hughes interprets the likely impacts of Guevara's death on the rest of Latin America. He accurately predicts that Guevara "will be eulogized as the model revolutionary who met a heroic death"; however, in his continued analysis, he fails to incorporate evidence of Soviet pressure on Cuba, as well as Castro and Guevara's fallout, leading me to believe that many of these details were not known to the US at the time.

Larson, Jeff A. and Lizardo, Omar. "Generations, Identities, and the Collective Memory of Che Guevara." *Sociological Forum*, 22 no 4 (Dec. 2007): 429. Accessed 9 April 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20110227>.

Larson and Lizardo's article evaluates the commercialization of Che's icon and the transformation of his image as a symbol. While the article itself was extremely useful, I used it largely as a primary source to evaluate the excerpts it includes from the *New York Times* during the years 1968-1969. These excerpts, among others included in the article, demonstrate the power of his influence throughout the 20th century.

Montgomery, Paul L. "Che Guevara's Last Stand?" *The New York Times*, 8 October 1967: E4.

Published the day after his death, Montgomery's article reflects the rising score of newspaper stories popularizing his life and martyrdom. This particular article followed his last few missions after he dropped out of Cuban government. In this paper, it was primarily used to assess how much the American media knew of him at the time of his death (there were rumors of his presence in the Dominican Republic, China, and Vietnam) and the goals of his Bolivian mission.

Ratliff, William E. "A New Old Che Guevara Interview." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 46 no. 3 (Aug 1966): 288-300. Accessed 8 April 2015.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2510630>

Ratliff's publication is a translated interview of Che Guevara done by two Chinese journalists in 1959, an often-overlooked interview that was not released until much later. I used it to study two primary subjects: 1) how Guevara reported his account of the Cuban Revolution, and 2) how Guevara assessed the then-upcoming goals of the new Cuban state.

Rohter, Larry. "Cuba Buries Che, the Man, but Keeps the Myth Alive." *The New York Times*, 18 October 1997: A3.

Written and published on the day of Che's ceremonial funeral in Cuba, this article details the scene at the mausoleum during the celebration. I found it interesting to note that despite his immense popularity, Guevara isn't universally loved even in Cuba, where a few people the article interviewed on the scene found the event fake and overhyped. This was used as a primary source to evaluate the second peak of his popularity in the 1990's, after his 30th anniversary.

Rothbard, Murray. "Ernesto Che Guevara R.I.P." *Left and Right: A Journal of Libertarian Thought* 3, no. 3 (1967): 3. Accessed 30 January 2015.  
[http://mises.org/sites/default/files/Left%20and%20Right\\_3\\_3\\_1.pdf](http://mises.org/sites/default/files/Left%20and%20Right_3_3_1.pdf)

This publication by a historian and libertarian theorist right after Che's death evaluated his life as a revolutionary and the implications of his passing away. I found it helpful to look at his legacy through the lens of a scholar, and used it to assess contrasting opinions of Che from people on different ends of the political spectrum.

Time Magazine. "A Myth Embalmed in a Matrix of Ignorance." *Time Magazine*, 12 October 1970: 40. Accessed 20 January 2015. EBSCOhost.

Time Magazine published a number of articles on Che Guevara both throughout his lifetime and after his death. This one was published after his death, and analyzed Che's legacy and his transformation into a myth and a legend. I used it to see how Che inspired revolutions and understand just how rapidly he had been established as an icon and symbol.

Time Magazine. "Castro's Brain." *Time Magazine*, 8 August 1960: 38. Accessed 16 January 2015. EBSCOhost.

This cover article by Time Magazine analyzed Che's role in the Cuban Revolution. To me, it was mostly invaluable in assessing how familiar the West was with Che during his lifetime and what the general perception and understanding of Che was.

Time Magazine. "The Cult of Che." *Time Magazine*, 17 May 1968: 21. Accessed 22 January 2015. EBSCOhost.

Published less than a year after his death, this article also examines the rise of the "Che myth" and the dedicated culture surrounding it. It was fascinating for me to see how quickly Che had captivated students, workers, radicals and intellectuals all around the world as a martyr.

The Associated Press. "Guevara's remains finally at rest." *The Register-Guard*, 18 October 1997. news.google.com. Accessed 10 January 2015.

This article was published in a newspaper in Eugene, Oregon on the day of the event, demonstrating exactly how influential Che Guevara was even thirty years after his death. I used it to evaluate public interest and opinion in the United States of the ceremonial funeral in Cuba.

Totten, Michael J. "The Truth About Che Guevara." *World Affairs Journal*, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org>. Accessed 10 January 2015.

This particular in-depth opinion piece is particularly condemning of Guevara. Totten refutes claims of the Cuban love of Che, saying it is forced by the government, and paints Guevara as a brutal, ruthless murderer mistakenly embraced by rebellious youth in the Western world. Despite its modern publication date, I used it as a primary source to assess his legacy and reputation in the US so many decades after his death.

## Secondary Sources

Anderson, Jon Lee. *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1997.

This book is arguably one of the most detailed biographies available of Che Guevara. It tracks his life from beginning to end, and examines the aftermath of his life in some detail as well. I used this biography to follow the course of Che's life and find details of his endeavors in the Cuban Revolution and beyond.

Caistor, Nick. *Che Guevara: A Life*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2010.

This book also tracks Che and his work during his lifetime. As the events of his lifetime largely serves as background and context for my paper, I found the broader overview of his life events very helpful in this biography.

Casey, Michael J. *Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2009.

Casey's account of Che Guevara focuses almost exclusively on his legacy. It traces the aftermath of his work in various major locations throughout the Americas, including Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela and Miami, as well as the US and Europe from the 1960's to 2009. I found this book extremely useful in recognizing the immortality of Che Guevara as an icon and his social and cultural legacy across the globe, and quote it numerous times in my paper.

Castaneda, Jorge G. *Companero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara*. New York, NY: Random House, 1998.

This book helped me get the background for Che's life and legacy. Unlike other biographies, it focused a lot more on analysis of his character and the motivation behind his actions, and thus really helped me understand conflicting perceptions of him after death.

"Che Guevara." Heroes and Killers of the 20th Century,  
<http://www.moreorless.net.au/heroes/guevara.html>. Accessed 20 January 2015.

This site provided a detailed timeline of Che's life, which I used both to confirm the dates I had in hand and to gain context for his life events. In addition, it contains analysis and commentary on Che's life as a revolutionary, including his time as an executioner in the prisons.

“Che Guevara, to his death in 1967.” Macrohistory and the World Timeline, <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch24x.html>. Accessed 12 January 2015.

This site follows Che’s life from 1960 to his death in 1967. I used it to understand the motivation behind his actions in the Congo and Bolivia, as well as the causes that lead to his death.

Dilger, Gerhard. Review of *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, by Jon Lee Anderson, and *Che Guevara. Biographie*, by Jorge G. Castañeda. *Iberoamericana*, no. 11 (September 2003): 329-321. Accessed 19 January 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41673340>.

This review analyzes Che Guevara’s life and legacy through the Anderson’s *A Revolutionary Life* and Castaneda’s *Che Guevara. Biographie*. I used it to pick out the highlights of both books and contrast the way his character and person was portrayed.

Gott, Richard. “Poster Boy.” *The Guardian*, 2 June 2006. [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com). Accessed 3 January 2015.

This article tracks the origins of the iconic *Guerrillero Heroico* photo. In addition to talking about how it was taken, it follows the transformation of his picture and the different manifestations of his icon. I used it to understand Che’s status as an icon.

Harris, Richard L. *Death of a Revolutionary: Che Guevara’s Last Mission*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970, 2000, 2007.

A complete biography of Che’s life and death, this book proved especially useful in examining Guevara’s ultimate capture and demise. It chronicled in great detail the circumstances and events surrounding Guevara’s death, and provided me with a unique understanding of his relations with the US - and more specifically the CIA - as he neared the end of his life.

Hilton, Isabel. “Still a Messiah?” *New Statesman*, 4 October 2007. [newstatesman.com](http://newstatesman.com). Accessed 25 January 2015.

This article examines the true appeal of Che Guevara four decades after his death. It makes the argument that Che Guevara may offer very little as a guide for revolution, but the emotional and symbolic appeal of his image continues to inspire. I used it to help me understand how Che Guevara’s legacy has lasted to this day.

Irvine, Martha. "Che Guevara's Iconic Image Endures." Washington Post, 23 September 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com>. Accessed 24 January 2015.

This article examines Che Guevara's place as a cultural icon. It talks about how often people display his image on t-shirts and posters without even knowing who he is, and how his icon operates independently of his history in today's society.

Kallen, Stuart A. *Che Guevara: You Win Or You Die*. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2013.

I used this book for background on Che Guevara. It focused on his revolutionary activities and his martyrdom, including his willingness to die for his cause. This biography was helpful in allowing me to understand the extent to which Che believed in his cause.

Kunzle, David. *Che Guevara: Icon, Myth, Message*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Los Angeles, 1997.

This book examines the artistic and cultural legacy of Che's image. It follows the different variations of Korda's original image through history, and examines the depictions of Che in various cultures around the world. I used it primarily to help me analyze Che's legacy and the potency of his image.

Lacey, Marc. "A Communist He Was, but Today, He Sells." *The New York Times*, 9 October 2007: A4.

Within this article, Lacey evaluates Che's modern-day position as a marketing and branding tool. This source was primarily used as further proof of the proliferation of Che's image in today's capitalist world, as well as insight into his children and family's reaction to the uses of his iconic image.

Landau, Saul. "Poster Boy of the Revolution." Review of *The Life and Death of Che Guevara*, by Jorge G. Castaneda. *The Washington Post*, 19 October 1997. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/reviews/companero.htm>.

This book review compared Castaneda's biography of Che to others by varying authors and historians, allowing me to put together a comprehensive, holistic evaluation of his character. I found it interesting that every biography seems to highlight that despite his failures, Che's own character, personal drive and ideology transformed him into a myth of 20th century revolution.

Lopez, Luis and Trisha Ziff. Chevolution [Video]. Retrieved 30 January 2015, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn3Ua8kPvhc&noredirect=1>.

This documentary tracks the evolution of Che's icon (hence the title). It evaluates the background of the image and how it has changed over time, including its usages and symbolic representations to different cultures. I found it extremely useful in following Che's legacy through the image.

Lipscomb, Thomas H. "The Revised Che Guevara." *The New York Times*, 26 November 1995: E3.

After the release of new reports on Che's final expedition in Bolivia, this article revised understanding of Che and his mission at the time. Specifically, more and more began to question the relationship between Castro and Guevara during his mission, and I used it to help determine how much support Castro really have to these revolutionary movements Che attempted to start (if any at all).

Payne, Kenneth. "Building the Base: Al Qaeda's Focoist Strategy." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 34: 124-143, 2011.

In his article, Payne draws parallels between Al Qaeda's strategies and Guevara's tactics of military warfare. He argues Al Qaeda has adopted Che's idea of foco, which relied on small, fast-moving paramilitary groups to launch strikes and inspire locals. The article was of particular interest to me because while I had found many instances of Che's name, image, and brand being used to support a cause, I had found very few examples of his legacy that directly relied on his life's work. In addition, it was fascinating for me to see the unbelievably diversified appeal of Che so long after his death.

Priestland, David. *The Red Flag: A History of Communism*. New York, NY: Grove Press. 2009.

This book provided me a general background on communism and Marxism around the world. Most importantly, it helped me place Che's work in context of everything else going on at the time, and allowed me to analyze the impacts he had on other communist and socialist movements around the globe.

Reid-Henry, Simon. *Fidel and Che: A Revolutionary Friendship*. New York, NY: Walker Publishing Company, 2009.

I used this book as a background to the dual lives of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. It presents an interesting contrast as well as overlap in character between the two Cuban



revolutionaries, detailing how their personalities lead to their ultimate fallout and alienation.

Rohter, Larry. "Che Today? More Easy Rider Than Revolutionary." *The New York Times*, 26 May 2004: A4.

Published immediately after the release of *The Motorcycle Diaries* movie, Rohter's article examines Che's transformation from an icon of counterculture to a symbol of romantic adventure in youth. To me, this source was particularly interesting because it highlighted the shift from focusing on Che the hero and martyr to Che the human, marking the start of a new era in his legacy.

Scauzillo, Robert J. "Ernesto 'Che' Guevara: A Research Bibliography." *Latin American Research Review* 5 no. 2 (Summer, 1970): 53-82. Accessed 9 April 2015.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2502225>.

Scauzillo's study, rather than investigating the man himself, investigates the plethora of literature published on Che Guevara in the years during and following his death, marking the trends in popularity and publication over the years. Specifically, it notes that Guevara's martyrdom was given significantly more attention than anything he accomplished in his lifetime. I used this article to contrast Che's legacy with his achievements in leadership, and their relative importance to the public.

Sinclair, Andrew Annandale. "Che Guevara: Argentine-Cuban revolutionary." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Last modified 12 December 2014.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/248399/Che-Guevara>. Accessed 20 January, 2015.

I used this site as my first source and a starting platform for my research. It gave me a broad overview and summary of Guevara's life, which I found really helpful in proceeding with and directing my research. I also used this source to corroborate general claims made in other websites I found.

Steel, Mark. "However debased the image, Che's legend lives on." *The Independent*, 10 October 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk>. Accessed 10 January 2015.

Again an examination of Che's legacy years decades after his death, this piece is quick to point out just how far the current usages of his iconic image have gone from his original

political ideals. It also details part of the CIA's original depictions of Che in their later declassified files.

Stodden, William. "Chronology of The Economic Ministry of Comrade Guevara after the Revolution in Cuba." *Marxists Internet Archive*, 17 May 2000.  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/biography/econ-ministry.htm> Accessed 9 April 2015.

This source is a secondary account of Che's work and accomplishments after the success of the Cuban Revolution, namely his achievements in the Cuban government and abroad. It provided a very clear, straightforward chronological description of his engagements, which I used and cited in my paper.

Swarthmore College. "French students and workers campaign for reform (May Revolt), 1968." Global Nonviolent Action Database,  
<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/french-students-and-workers-campaign-reform-may-revolt-1968>. Accessed 29 January 2015.

I used this site to collect information on the May 1968 events in France. It went over the event and catalysts in good detail, which I used to assess the impact Che and the Cuban Revolution had on the strikes.

"The Cuban Revolution of 1959." The Cold War Museum,  
<http://www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/TheCubanRevolutionof1959.asp>. Accessed 20 January 2015.

I used this site to gain background on the Cuban Revolution. It gave both a broad overview of the revolution and summaries of the major battles, which helped me understand the role Che played in the war. In addition, it provided a comparatively less biased overview than the other sources I dealt with, which was very useful to me in evaluating his role as a leader.

"The domino effect: Africa and Middle East unrest after uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt." *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2012. [telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk). Accessed 4 February 2015.

This source is an image gallery of protests and other unrest in the Middle East during the Arab Spring. I used it to obtain a picture (seen in Appendix II) and examine the effects of

Che's influence in the area. The rest of the pictures, though not presented here, helped me draw parallels between the conditions there and what was going on in Cuba, the Congo, and Bolivia when Che was there.

Valdes, Rosa Tania. "Cuba remembers Che Guevara 40 years after his fall." *Reuters*, 8 October 2007. [uk.reuters.com](http://uk.reuters.com). Accessed 24 January 2015.

This article helped me understand the legacy of Che Guevara in Cuba. I used it primarily to assess public opinion, as well as obtain perspective on where the revolutionary stands in the nation as a whole. The article also interviewed a former Cuban soldier who fought under Guevara's command and detailed his accounts of Che in the army, which I quote in my paper.

