



The Bolivian Diary: Authorized Edition

Ernesto Che Guevara , Camilo Guevara

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This is Che Guevara's last diary, compiled from notebooks found in his backpack when he was captured by the Bolivian army in October 1967 and subsequently executed. It became an instant bestseller. Newly revised by Che's widow (Aleida March), and including a thoughtful preface by his eldest son Camilo, this is the definitive account of the attempt to spark a continent-wide revolution in Latin America. "Thanks to Che's invariable habit of noting the main events of each day, we have rigorously exact, priceless and detailed information on the heroic final moments of his life in Bolivia."--Fidel Castro Features of this new edition include:

Preface by Camilo Guevara
Introduction by Fidel Castro
Revised translation

Biographical note
Chronology
Glossary
Maps

32 pp black and white photos

The Bolivian Diary: Authorized Edition Details

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From Reader Review The Bolivian Diary: Authorized Edition for online ebook

Duane Tapken says

Its amazing to be able to read a diary and be able to actually put yourself there at that very time, especially in the jungle. Though Che has a large ego, his intentions were sincere, and Nelson Mandela once called him "a hero for anyone who truly values freedom."

It was interesting to note that Che was the leader from the start, though hailing from Argentina, having success in Cuba, and assembling a guerilla army made up of men AND women from Bolivia, Cuba and Peru. At no time did Che and his crew assassinate any peasants they encountered along the way, though the Bolivian Army which pursued them had no qualms in shooting/maiming innocent persons of their own country, including women and children (and nuns!). In addition, he kept everyone motivated, though heat and lack of supplies eventually brought about a few skirmishes.

Despite being outnumbered and in foreign territory, Che lost one single man in the first 7-8 months in the jungle, and this was via an unfortunate drowning. Though Che was captured and given a potential trial date, the decision was quickly made to execute him, as the fear of a worldly backlash of a man trying to assist the downtrodden poor would have been a PR disaster for Bolivia, and the United States. It is also interesting to note that the US became involved, as Che indicated, due to the formation of some type of new oil company. We know now that the CIA became involved because Exxon/Mobil etc. were beginning to step in and suck the natural resources out of the country, and these companies could not operate under the threat of someone trying to help liberate the country (and later all of South America), while maximizing profit at the same time!

Of the 4 men who made it out of Bolivia via Chile after Che was executed, all were Cuban, and 3 are still alive today. The 4th man died in 1994, long after receiving political asylum in Sweden. Overall, it takes a small while to really get a grasp of the situation, as every member, including Che himself, is referred to by 2 or 3 nicknames along the way. A helpful glossary must be referred to, but once the characters are emblazened in your mind, you easily find yourself rooting for the guerillas to come out victorious!

mohamadadali abtahi says

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Calzean says

This diary is full of interest - Che wrote a daily journal from his arrival in Bolivia to start a new revolution, one planned to eventually include the whole of South America. Che shows his humanity is noting birthdays of his family, his single mindedness in the revolution, his ability to maintain the spirits of his troops, his anger when people failed in their duties and his fairness to Army soldiers he captured.

Where is he when we need him?

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It's really fantastic to see Che's ultimately futile attempt to start a Cuban-style revolution in Bolivia recounted in his own words. Especially interesting for me is his ceaseless optimism in the face of circumstances which we, in hindsight, know to be hopeless.

To really get a complete understanding of the "man behind the myth" (cliche, I know), it is vital to read this final diary: recommended.his very own words from the guerrilla front.

As a sidebar, the glossary in the back which defines the (many) nicknames Che gives his companeros, while also giving their biographies, is indispensable to understand this volume more fully.

Edward M. says

Fascinating book of Guevara's travels to Bolivia to start a revolution. Insights into the difficulties he had there with the climate and lack of support from the populace. Great insight into his thinking and beliefs.

Paul says

Che Guevara was more than just an icon on a T-shirt, in his time he was a real revolutionary who played a key part in the Cuban revolution and was aiming to overthrow South American dictatorships to free the people.

This book is a translation of the diary that he wrote when he was in Bolivia with a small team of revolutionaries. It is written with daily notes and reports on their progress as they move through the jungle, avoiding the army that is looking for them and talking to the peasants to get them onside.

They have some early success in skirmishes with the army, but as they go on they suffer from health issues and have to keep continually moving. Their small numbers mean that every battle counts, but as the number of men on the government side increases, they start to lose men and the initiative that they had. Before long they are caught and captured.

Takes a while to get going, and in the end isn't too bad as a read. It is full of facts about where they are and their progress, but throughout you get a sense of fear of the men as the net closes. The introduction is by Fidel Castro, and is a bit of a rant. Otherwise it is a reasonable read

Andrew says

An interesting read but in truth not the best of Che's books both the motorcycle diaries and reminiscences of a Cuban revolutionary war are the better reads but in fairness Che lived to update edit and enhance the narrative with those books something which he was unable to do with this book as sadly this is the final of his journals and released after his death which occurred during this campaign...as ever it is still an interesting read but due to its incomplete nature it is peppered with unnecessary passages on what Che and his comrades had for lunch etc...in fairness given the relentless campaign there is little doubt lunch was never far from their minds.

There is however much to admire however in these writings mainly in regard to Che's ideology.

Sokari says

Just seen Che Parts 1&2 so it made sense to re-read the Bolivian Diary. Part 2 of the film documents Che's Bolivian campaign which ended in his death. The film very much sticks to Che's account and that of some of his Cuban comrades who managed to escape during those fateful last days. I felt incredibly depressed after seeing Part 2 as one begins to realise the campaign was doomed from the beginning and probably should have been postponed for at least 6 months. The failure to get the Bolivian communist party to support the campaign and then the failure to adequately gain the support and trust of the mostly indigenous people (campesinos) both contributed to the fateful ending. Nonetheless in retrospect I don't see the campaign as being a failure - Bolivia has a socialist government run by Evo Morales and then there is Venezuela and Argentina. Che has influenced struggles all over the world, his dedication and commitment an example and his words full of wisdom and pertinent today as they were 40 years ago.

Gary says

An introduction from Fidel Castro and the final diary of a figure like Guevara? It would qualify as worth a read on the back of that alone.

The accompanying notes are very helpful as a Who's Who as you read through - I found myself referring to it frequently to keep on top of this.

If you're looking to learn about the Guevara's history, there will be better books to start on. If, however, you want to get into the man's head, then what better place than his diary. It strikes me as honest and it's certainly interesting.

Paulina says

Do not read the intro by Fidel Castro unless you want to get killed by war-cries against antirevolutionaries and pure propaganda. I did read it. Cost me a headache.

It's hard to say what do I think about this book. It's not really a book. It's a diary. I took it with hope to find some ideas, some ideals and to make a better picture of Che, without the propaganda and his icons. I didn't. Well, it's just an account of him and his comrades trying to get a revolution going on. At first you get bored of accounts '3 kilometres this day.' the next day - '5 kilometres next day', but after a few pages you get past the boredom and just get into the experience - the jungle, the constant fear, the long kilometres and you find yourself supporting Che.

He didn't write why he was fighting for. He wrote about his actions and how he was fighting for what he believed was right.

Raised my respect for Guevara.

P.S. Do not mix this book with Dire Straits' Brothers in Arms for you might just not be able to get away from it

Damon says

The diaries give a fascinating picture into the unromantic life of a guerilla freedom fighter, but it also shows some of the difficulties, in training, supplying and administering a guerilla army in a fight for freedom in the jungles of South America. It was very sad to be reading this diary knowing that Che would never be allowed to finish his work because the CIA led Bolivian army mercenaries assassinated him and hid his body. Out of

all of his diaries, I enjoyed the Motorcycle Diaries the best because it showed his gradually changing World view, and how he changed from a promising doctor to a World renowned freedom fighter. I also enjoyed his Cuban Revolution Diaries, for it showed his growing experience and learning curve in making up for mistakes and false starts, to finally freeing Cuba from a corrupt dictatorship. The best writing he did was on how to be a guerilla fighter, and how the US (imperialist) government systematically interfered with South American life and progress by inserting special forces rangers and supplies into different groups to insure their best corporate interests in the region. This included assassinations, beatings, torture, election rigging and propaganda. The speech that Che Guevara gave to the United Nations in 1964 is included in its entirety, and it is fascinating to listen to this man of letters argue that the US is in the wrong for attacking Cuba, blockading supplies and medicine, and for sending troops and money to different factions around the World to protect corporate interests, which by definition makes the United States Not a Protector of Freedom, but an imperialist war monger out to make a profit. It is interesting to find that because of this speech, Che and other Cuban Ambassadors were banned from the United Nations and other organizations, and yet because of the recent release of government documents we all now know that he was in the right with his speeches.

Timm DiStefano says

Hadn't read any material on Che or had a personal opinion about the man before reading excerpts from his journals. I can only dream to have an ounce of the passion he had in the face of injustice and oppression.

A few bits that stood out while reading..

"This might have been the first time I was faced literally, with the dilemma of choosing between my devotion to medicine and my duty as a revolutionary soldier. There at my feet, was a backpack full of medicine and a box of ammunition. They were too heavy to carry both. I picked up the ammunition, leaving the medicine and started to cross the clearing, heading to the cane field."

The guerrilla group and the peasantry began to merge into one single mass, although no one could say at what point on the long road this happened or at what moment words became reality and we became a part of the peasant masses. I only know that for me, those consultations with the peasants of the Sierra Maestra converted my spontaneous and somewhat lyrical resolve into a different, more severe force."

Our mission is to develop what is good and noble in each person, to convert every person into a revolutionary, from the Davids who did not understand very well, to the Banderases, who died without seeing the dawn. Blind and unrewarded sacrifices also made the revolution. Those of us who today see its achievements have the responsibility to remember those who fell along the way, and to work for a future where there will be fewer stragglers."

"But the guerrilla fighter as the conscious element of the vanguard of the people must display the moral conduct of a true priest of the desired reform. To the stoicism forced by the difficult conditions of warfare should be added an austerity born of rigid self control that prevents a single excess, a single slip, whatever the circumstances. The guerrilla soldier should be an ascetic."

"All free and women of the world must be prepared to avenge the crime of the Congo. Perhaps many of those soldiers, who were turned into sub-humans by imperialist machinery, believe in good faith that they are defending the rights of a superior race. In this Assembly, however, those peoples whose skins are darkened by a different sun, colored by different pigments, constitute the majority. And they fully and clearly understand that the difference between human beings does not lie in the color of their skin, but in the forms of ownership of the means of production, in the relations of production."

Abe says

Ernesto "Che" Guevara de la Serna's Bolivian diary. It describes the frustration and military difficulties Guevara encountered in Bolivia that led to his capture and execution. I read both Spanish and English versions. Read the Spanish version if you can as somethings are lost in the translation.
