



Che Guevara: An Exploration of Revolutionary Theory

by Jamie E. Hill

During the mid-20th century, a number of revolutionary movements were being conducted throughout South America. Some of which applied the theories developed by Che Guevara during the Cuban Revolution in the 1950's. This paper will analyze Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory', from his work *Guerrilla Warfare*, in relation to the revolutions in Cuba and Bolivia.¹ The comparison will be made to determine what methods worked in Cuba, which led to the revolution's success, and then determine to what extent the 'Foco Theory' was actually employed to reach that success. In addition, other South American dissident groups attempted to use the same theory and did not achieve the same results. As a result, there will be an analysis of the events that took place in Bolivia to determine the contributing factors to the revolution and what may have caused its failure. The end result will provide a comparison of the revolutions and determine what led to certain successes or failures and why. It will also provide an assessment of Che's theory to determine if it is useful, and valid, to the events that inspired and supported its creation.

From his experiences in the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara attributed three main aspects to revolutionary success and the first was that "popular forces can win against the army."² The first aspect clearly identifies the enemy and was chosen to reassure the people who would take up arms that they were capable of defeating the established leadership and military. Believing you can win is obviously an essential piece to include because if the people thought that they had no chance of winning, it would be unlikely that they would fight or rise up. The second concept of Che's theory is that "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them."³ The second aspect was meant to inspire revolutionaries to move forward to start the revolution. If revolutionaries had to wait until all conditions were in place, it could be possible that either the initial force would have lost interest, been eliminated, or that they were not longer able to take power. Therefore, it is important that the revolutionary parties push forward as a way to motivate or inspire others to join or support the revolutionary cause. The third characteristic is that "in underdeveloped America the countryside is the basic area of armed fighting."⁴ This was a way for Guevara to defend, and

¹ 'Foco Theory' was a revolutionary doctrine to be applied for successful revolutions in South American states. It came from lessons that Guevara drew out of other literature and the events that took place during the Cuban Revolution.

² Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University Nebraska Press. 1985). As found in Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 604.

³ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University Nebraska Press. 1985). As found in Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 604.

⁴ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1985): 45.

bolster, the actions of Castro and his revolutionary group during the revolution. This idea would keep conflict out of the cities and put strain on the resources and manpower of the military. In Che's opinion, these three things were pinnacle to the success of the Cuban revolution. Now it is necessary to determine the extent to which the three aspects existed in Cuba.

In 1951, Batista came to power in Cuba through a coup d'état. He increased the pay of the military and the size of police force in an attempt to reduce crime in the casino retreat that was Cuba for vacationers.⁵ At the same time, he attempted to eliminate potential threats to his leadership through bribery or force.⁶ The communist party of Cuba was one of the groups that Batista paid off and as a result they "assumed a working relationship with Batista."⁷ This removed much of the communist effort that existed within Cuba, even though poverty and illiteracy were on the rise, which was odd because resistance did not increase as conditions worsened.⁸ As a result of the conditions of the working class, and because of the economic disparity between the landowners, Batista's leadership, and remainder of the population, civil unrest in Cuba began to increase. From 1953 to 1958 Fidel Castro, his brother Raul, Che Guevara and Frank Pais conducted guerrilla operations against Batista's government and the military, which resulted in an eventual overthrow of the regime and Castro's rise to power. During that time, Guevara extracted what he believed were lessons in conducting a guerrilla revolution and published them in 1961. There were a number of key elements that led to the success of the Cuban revolution, some of which were included in Guevara's theories and others were not. In reality, there were five key elements to the success of the revolution and they were: outside support, a motivated and frustrated populace, the existence of a dedicated guerrilla movement, brutal government reactions, favourable ground and finally a bit of luck, which is not an element, but more of a wildcard. The following are examples of the elements that led to the success of the movement that would have otherwise faltered.

Financial support is key to the success of any revolution. An external source is better because it is removed from the conflict and it is therefore safe from most threats. During the Cuban revolution, Castro, Che, and other revolutionaries were able to gain support from a number of external sources. In 1955, Castro was able to collect thousands of dollars in monetary support while in the United States.⁹ In the same year, the former Cuban president, Prio Scarras, "donated at least fifty thousand dollars to Castro", which enabled him to buy not only the weapons and supplies for the Manzanillo operation, but also the yacht that they used to sail there.¹⁰ These funds, and the funds received from the United States visit, made the 1956 assault on Manzanillo Garrison possible.¹¹ Though the operation itself was a failure, it brought Castro and his group back into Cuba and helped rally more support. Lastly, a number of people who

⁵ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 692.

⁶ IBID.

⁷ Boris Goldenburg. *The Cuban Revolution and Latin America*. (London: Allen and Unwin: 1965): 112-113.

⁸ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975):693.

⁹ IBID 698.

¹⁰ One of the people who helped fund Castro's efforts was Prio Sacarra. He had spent millions of dollars in an attempt to remove Batista's regime from power in Cuba. Sacarras was the previous president of Cuba whom Batista had removed during a coup in 1951.¹⁰ This helped not only Castro's movement, but the entire revolutionary cause because it supplied other revolutionary groups with funds, and pitted parts of the populace against Batista.

Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 699.

¹¹ IBID.

were exiled from Cuba that now resided in the United States and Mexico supported Castro and the Cuban revolutionary movement.¹² Much of this occurred after 1957, which is when Fidel was interviewed from his mountain base by the *New York Times*.¹³ When the story about his cause got to the American public, and the ex-patriots, there was a measure of sympathy, which eventually turned into more aid from overseas. Overall, this continued to expand Castro's financial support, which ultimately helped enable his movement and funded their efforts. It made them one of the best armed and supplied groups in Cuba, which increased their strength as a revolutionary movement. In addition, some of this money was used to consolidate other guerrilla groups under his command, which likely assisted in his capacity to gain power in 1958 over others. This is mind, it is clear that the external funding to the Cuban revolution, and particularly Castro's movement, was instrumental to its success.

Another integral part of the Cuban Revolution's success was the existence of the revolutionary guerrillas, or 'sierra'.¹⁴ The leadership of the sierra was different than the general public, or 'llano', because their primary goal was revolution. The llano, were crucial to the revolution only when there were general strikes or civil uprisings because their goal was not revolution unless it was incited by revolutionaries or circumstance. There were a number of reasons that the sierra was important throughout the revolution and the first is that they caused problems for Batista's government and the military. Two of the larger events that Castro's group took part in were the 1953 assaults on Moncada and Bayamo, which consisted of a guerrilla force of only 150 men.¹⁵ Another event to note was the previously mentioned attack on Manzanillo, which only consisted of a boat of Castro's troops and a number of locals who attacked before Castro's men even arrived.¹⁶ What did result from these events was frustration from the military and police, which led to abuse or torture of the revolutionaries and sometimes civilians as well. This led to a growing public support for the revolutionary movement. As time went on, and more guerrilla operations or strikes took place, the government forces continued their excesses. As a result, the decline in support for Batista's regime also continued. The existence of the sierra movement also tied down a large amount of government resources because Batista had numerous troops scouring the countryside looking for guerrillas, which took them away from the cities. This was not only expensive, but also labour intensive, and put additional stresses onto a regime that benefitted dissident movements as a whole.

Local citizens during the Cuban Revolution were just as important, if not more important, than the guerrillas themselves.¹⁷ When revolutionary theorists look at the final events that led up to the success of the revolution, they can clearly see that it was an urban movement, not a rural one as prescribed by Che; and as Castro would like to have people believe.¹⁸ In fact, there are some who believe that the Cuban revolution was more of an urban conflict than a guerrilla one,

¹² IBID.

¹³ IBID 701.

¹⁴ Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 593.

¹⁵ Robert Asprey., *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 695.

¹⁶ IBID 699.

¹⁷ Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 601-602.

¹⁸ IBID.

which would put the primary role on the masses, and not the revolutionary's efforts.¹⁹ Fortunately for him, Castro's guerrillas ended up on top through a combination of organization, quick reaction, good equipment, elimination of rival leadership, and luck. The llano were not only crucial during the general strikes and civil uprisings, but they also supported the guerrillas and provided a haven where they could hide.²⁰ This made them a key element to the revolution's success.

In addition to the peoples themselves, the Cubans already had an internal leadership that helped organize strikes and uprisings.²¹ Some revolutionary theorists believe that "guerrilla success in Cuba was based largely on the pre-existing mass organization in the cities."²² Civilian leadership made large scale civilian action possible, which was pivotal in overthrowing the government and gaining control because it resulted in an unfriendly environment for Batista. The unease in the cities caused Batista to feel as though he was losing control of the country and consequently, he fled. The last thing about the citizens of Cuba was that they did not have much to lose by revolting compared to living under Batista's regime.²³ The poor conditions of the general population gave them a reason to take the risk and act against the government rather than staying at home; even if it meant putting themselves at risk of government retaliation. This was due to the poor living conditions, the desire for land reforms, and the actions of Batista's forces, which were partly provoked by guerrilla actions.

The excesses taken by Batista's government were a contributing factor to his eventual downfall. It has been clearly documented that on several occasions the military and police reacted with torture, murder, and extreme punishments for anyone involved, or thought to be involved, in guerrilla activities.²⁴ This led to sympathy for the guerrilla cause and in some cases when citizens were wrongly accused, it led to support or retaliation from the communities. One example can be seen in 1953 when Fidel Castro and a group of armed men led an assault on two military outposts.²⁵ The guerrillas were easily defeated and most were captured before being tortured and killed by the military and police presence.²⁶ Fidel himself was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but the excesses of Batista's troops far outweighed the capture and death of the rebels because the actions taken by the government forces "swung a considerable number of persons to Castro's cause."²⁷ This support not only made it possible for the guerrillas to survive without being betrayed while living in the Sierra Maestra, but also gave them a support base to draw from. Also, the excesses of Batista's government during their "counter-terror [efforts] alienated the Cuban middle class from the government and thus, neutralized the potential

¹⁹ Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 601-602.

²⁰ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd., 1975): 700.

²¹ James Petras. "Che Guevara and Contemporary Revolutionary Movements" *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 25, No. 4 (July 1998): 17-18.

²² IBID 17.

²³ Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 610.

²⁴ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd., 1975): 695, 698.

²⁵ IBID 695.

²⁶ IBID.

²⁷ IBID.

opposition to Castro, even in the armed forces and police.”²⁸ Due to his excesses, Batista lost favour with the llano, the middle class, and as noted above, even some police and military. Knowing this, it is not difficult to see that a revolution was quite likely in Cuba, especially when some of the peasants really had nothing to lose if the government was overthrown because of unfavourable land policies.²⁹ Thus, Batista’s failure to effectively, and appropriately, react to guerrilla and urban resistance, was a contributing factor to him losing power.

Luck was another aspect that helped Castro’s revolutionary efforts, and, though it is not a necessity for all revolutions, it was critical to the success of the Cuban revolution. Though I have not found any literature to clearly support this belief, it is evident to me that there were a number of things that merely fell into place, which allowed the revolution to succeed. The most prominent benefit of the luck that Castro’s men received was their ascent to power. When Batista left in the winter of 1959 there was no clear leader to take control. The power vacuum created by Batista’s departure created the conditions for someone to take command and Castro’s group ascended to power. This was not based on size, but mainly because they were the best organized and equipped of the revolutionary groups. With quick action, Castro was able to eliminate some of his competition, take control, and then maintain it, which was somewhat attributed to luck.

Knowing the ground of the Sierra Maestra was the last key factor to the success of the Castro’s guerrilla movement. This area “was too big [and] the terrain too difficult, for troops to plug all exits.”³⁰ Knowing the ground enabled Castro, Che, and their other compatriots to survive even at their weakest moments, which followed one of their largest defeats; even with numerous patrols trying to find them. Their survival was achieved through the use of “constant mobility [and] constant vigilance”, which Guevara would later include as a necessity for survival and favourable ground made this possible.³¹ The land was considered ‘favourable’ by Che and the people were also supportive. A sanctuary is necessary for the success of a guerrilla movement and having such a base allowed Castro’s men to avoid government forces, rebuild, and organize their efforts against the government.³² Without the mobility and evasiveness that the area provided, they may not have been able to rebuild and eventually take power.³³ The benefit of knowing the ground cannot be overlooked and it was a factor to Castro’s survival and success.

Looking at the three main tenants of ‘Foco Theory’ we can see that the revolution in Cuba did not follow all of Guevara’s points for success. In Cuba, the people did believe they could win against the government and the revolution did start before all of the conditions were set, which means it followed the first two aspects, but the last is where there is a divergence. Even though the guerrillas fought in the countryside of Cuba, it should be obvious that the major events that led to the downfall of the government were in urban areas, such as the general strikes in Havana. This was not the opinion of Castro or Che, but when the guerrilla leaders wanted to assert their right to the leadership, it is clear why they would make their actions seem more

²⁸ H. Edward Price Jr. “The Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Terrorism” *Comparative Studies of Society and History* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan. 1977): 54.

²⁹ Matt Childs. “An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara’s ‘Foco Theory’ ” *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 603.

³⁰ Robert Asprey., *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 700.

³¹ Che Guevara. *Guerrilla Warfare – A Method*, “Guerilla Reader” Walter, Laqueur, ed. (Philadelphia:Temple University Press, 1977): 208.

³² John Mecklin. *Mission In Torment*. (Garden City NY: Doubleday: 1965): 85.

³³ Che Guevara. *Guerrilla Warfare – A Method*, “Guerilla Reader” Walter, Laqueur, ed. (Philadelphia:Temple University Press, 1977): 208.

significant.³⁴ Though the actions of Castro and his guerrillas did influence the people, it would be unfair to give them a majority share of the credit because the cities were the critical points.

The Cuban revolution was successful because the conditions required for a revolution were present already. It is helpful that Batista's troops made fatal errors to polarize the population against them, but this only worsened the existing atmosphere. Similarly, the outside financial support was beneficial and the popular support for the guerrilla movement in rural areas did assist the revolutionaries, but this only happened because the conditions for revolution were already in place. They were in place because of the conditions and desires of the Cuban people. Again, one cannot forget luck and quick reaction, which resulted in Castro's ability to seize power.

During the 20th century there were numerous attempted revolutions and guerrilla movements in South America. For the purposes of this study, one case will be examined and it will be Bolivia. This case will provide a direct comparison to another revolutionary movement that Guevara took part in. From Bolivia one can determine successful and unsuccessful practices and see if they correlate to Guevara's revolutionary theory. This will then be compared to what took place in Cuba.

Bolivia had a revolutionary movement in the southeast of the country from 1966-1967.³⁵ This revolution was inspired by Guevara and eventually led to his death, but the important thing is to understand the parts of the revolution, which led, or didn't lead, to its success. As a devoted revolutionary, Che Guevara was ready to lead and organize revolutions abroad. While bringing the revolution to Bolivia, he made a crucial error in taking control of a foreign revolutionary militant group because he did so "without the approval of his presumed political allies."³⁶ This meant that he alienated some possible friendly revolutionary groups that could have supported his efforts in Bolivia in the same way that groups helped Castro in Cuba. In Bolivia, he "appear[ed] on alien turf without an invitation, convinced that the pending guerrilla war once he presented it with the *fait accompli* of his presence", which was the same mistake he made in the Congo that he had failed to learn from.³⁷ By failing to include the revolutionary and political elites, Guevara distanced himself from both the llana and the sierra of Bolivia, which clearly limited his assets and therefore his capabilities. This over-confidence may have attributed to the failed revolution in Bolivia and ultimately his death.

This over-confidence can be seen again in his overestimation of local support and the revolutionary situation. Unfortunately for Guevara the "local people were not receptive to revolutionary politics" in Bolivia.³⁸ One issue was that there was not enough support for the leftist movement that Guevara was trying to establish. This meant that with both the political elites and some of the populace against the revolution, there would be little chance of success because of a lack of a safe base and local support. The safe base or sanctuary is an integral part of favourable ground, which is necessary for survival. Local support is crucial for intelligence,

³⁴ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd., 1975): 693.

Matt Childs. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's 'Foco Theory' " *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 593.

³⁵ Richard Harris. "Reflections on Che Guevara's Legacy" *American Perspectives* Vol. 25, No. 4 (July 1998): 19.

³⁶ *IBID* 25.

³⁷ *IBID*.

³⁸ James Petras. "Che Guevara and Contemporary Revolutionary Movements" *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 25, No. 4 (July 1998): 14.

safety, and citizen uprisings, which Che failed to gain in Bolivia. Another problem was that unlike Cuba, the people of Bolivia did not believe in “the possibility of victory through violent struggle against the imperialist powers and their internal allies.”³⁹ Since the majority of the people did not support revolutionary politics and because many did not believe that they could win against the government, Che and his supporters were at a disadvantage from the outset.

Even though it was not mentioned in his writings, outside support was crucial to the Cuban revolution. As mentioned before, Castro and other revolutionary groups received thousands of dollars in monetary support, from groups in Mexico, the United States, and the previous president of Cuba. Che’s revolutionary movement was being supported by the Cuban government, which helped pay for supplies, but, unfortunately for Che, the Bolivian leadership was also getting outside support. Like in Cuba, the US government was strongly against the success of revolutions in South America, especially one that was incited by a socialist movement. In an attempt to stop the revolutionaries, the American government gave support to the Bolivian government by providing “Special Forces advisors to train a regiment of Rangers in counter insurgency tactics.”⁴⁰ This meant that the Bolivians had advisors to guide them in their strategy and train their troops to deal with the counter insurgency tactics, which Batista’s government lacked. Even though the “massacre by the Bolivian army of most of the young participants in the Teoponte guerrilla effort [caused] an important change [that] took place in Bolivian politics and popular culture”, there was not enough support of the masses to cause to revolution.⁴¹ In Cuba, an uprising led to a reprisal, which caused greater unrest and larger uprisings. This eventually caused the people to feel unsafe and as stated before, the middle class to feel alienated. Since this for the most part did not happen in Bolivia, the anti-government movement did not grow as it did in Cuba, and the civilians did not feel as though they had nothing to lose by rising up as the peasantry did in Cuba. This shows that outside support did not favour Guevara in Bolivia, but the government, which in turn assisted them by showing them how to react to the guerrillas effectively.

The last problem that came into play in Bolivia was the fact that Guevara was simply an outsider, which meant that he could not easily bring the people onto his side because they distrusted him.⁴² A problem that Guevara had was that he could not overcome the “division between Cubans and Bolivians”, which “stemmed from the heterogeneity of the group that existed in Bolivia.”⁴³ Also, the people of Bolivia were not denied land reforms, as opposed to pre-revolution Cuba, which not only meant that there was little drive for the populace to join Guevara, but in some cases they were even supplying the government sources with intelligence to locate Che’s guerrillas.⁴⁴ In addition to that, he never brought enough members of the Bolivian public into the fold and this caused two major problems for Guevara’s attempted revolution.⁴⁵ The first problem was that neither he nor his troops had a good understanding of the

³⁹ Matt Childs. “An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara’s ‘Foco Theory’” *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Oct. 1995): 610.

⁴⁰ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 713.

⁴¹ Richard Harris. “Reflections on Che Guevara’s Legacy” *American Perspectives* Vol. 25, No. 4 (July 1998): 23.

⁴² Edward Friedman. “Neither Mao, Nor Che: The Practical Evolution of Revolutionary Theory. A Comment on J. Moreno’s ‘Che Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare’” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 12, No. 2 (Apr. 1970): 135.

⁴³ Jose Moreno. “Che Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare: Doctrine, Practice and Evaluation” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 1970): 123.

⁴⁴ Robert Asprey. *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 713-714.

⁴⁵ IBID 713.

ground that they were working in. This meant that they had to rely on the locals for guides and tactical positioning, but the locals were more impressed with the government troops than the guerrillas and therefore were not ready to help.⁴⁶ In addition to that, none of the members of Che's force even spoke the native language of the people that they were trying to recruit in the southeast of Bolivia.⁴⁷ The second major problem was that there was not any intelligence or logistical support coming from the people on the ground to support Che's operation.⁴⁸ The intelligence that Che was using was coming from the Cuban intelligence sources and was not anywhere near as accurate as local knowledge from the people on site would have been. Clearly, the failure of Guevara to use the populace, and their lack of desire to join his movement, meant that his intelligence and knowledge of the land would be severely limited. This meant that he was foolishly trying to lead a revolution from the rural areas when he was practically blind and uninformed of his surroundings.

Going back to Guevara's 'Foco Theory' for Bolivia, it is fair to assume that some members of the revolutionary groups believed they could beat the government, but that was not the case in most of the populace, who had no major reason to rise up.⁴⁹ Also, the forces in Bolivia were ready and had some training for counter insurgency, which was not the case in Cuba. Moving on to the second reason part of Che's theory, one can see that there was a gross over-estimation of the conditions for revolution in Bolivia, which meant that the actions of the guerrillas would not cause the desired effect of inspiring revolution. Third, it is not possible to use the countryside as a base for fighting when the support of the locals does not fall in the revolutionaries' favour, especially when the leadership does not know the land. This was compounded back a lack accurate intelligence and a populace that had no strong revolutionary tendencies, which was certainly the case in Bolivia.

To determine if Guevara's three aspects were original we must look at them individually. The first lesson about believing you can beat the enemy is not something that can be attributed to Guevara because any successful mass action would need some hope to succeed, or the masses would not commit. Second, the countryside was not only something advocated before Guevara, but proved not to be the most effective means of revolution in Bolivia or Cuba. Last, the concept that revolutionary conditions may come after the insurrection has begun did not work out well in Bolivia, and arguably did not occur in Cuba either, because the conditions for revolution were present due to land issues. Therefore, one could say that what worked in Cuba may have worked in other states if the conditions were the same, but it is quite evident that the theories put forward by Che Guevara were not entirely original, did not necessarily reflect what happened in Cuba, and ultimately, were not effective elsewhere.

In conclusion, one can see that the theory put forth by Guevara did not necessary function as he thought and some aspects did not even apply to the revolution that he drew the lessons from. The evidence suggests that he likely drew the wrong keys to success from Cuba and tried to apply them to a completely different situation. Overall, Cuba succeeded because of outside support, a motivated and frustrated populace, the existence of a dedicated guerrilla movement, brutal government reactions, favourable ground, and some luck. The theory that Guevara

⁴⁶ IBID 714.

⁴⁷ IBID.

⁴⁸ Robert Dix. "Why Revolutions Succeed & Fail" *Polity* Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 436.

⁴⁹ Robert Asprey., *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*. Vols. 1 and 2. (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company Ltd.,1975): 713-714.

deduced from his experiences paid little notice to these key factors and because of this, it was not effective when applied. This could be attributed to the fact that he was not an effective general, but more of an academic.

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