

152255 :AM-GUEVARA

CUBA HONOURS ERNESTO +CHE+ GUEVARA
BY LIONEL MARTIN, REUTERS

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HAYANA, JUNE 15, REUTER - CUBA HAS BEGUN A YEAR-LONG CELEBRATION OF ERNESTO +CHE+ GUEVARA, THE MARXIST GUERRILLA WHO DIED 20 YEARS AGO FIGHTING FOR A REVOLUTION HE HOPED WOULD SWEEP LATIN AMERICA.

THE YEAR-LONG +NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF HOMAGE+ TO GUEVARA, AN ARGENTINA-BORN PHYSICIAN AND MARXIST IDEOLOGUE, WAS ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY ON THE 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH.

THE CELEBRATION MARKS A FURTHER STAGE IN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO'S +PROCESS OF RECTIFICATION+ CAMPAIGN, LAUNCHED LAST YEAR TO RENEW MARXIST DISCIPLINE IN CUBA. A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SAID.

THE OFFICIAL SAID IT WAS A TRIBUTE TO GUEVARA'S LEGACY OF REVOLUTIONARY FORTITUDE, HIS SPIRIT OF SINGLE-MINDED AUSTERITY AND SELF-SACRIFICE, AND HIS REPUTATION FOR INCORRUPTABILITY.

GUEVARA GAVE UP A SECURE LIFE AS A GOVERNMENT LEADER IN CUBA TO LEAD A FLEDGLING GUERRILLA WAR IN BOLIVIA, WHERE HE WAS KILLED ON OCTOBER 8, 1967. HE BECAME A MARTYR TO THE RADICAL LEFT IN THE LATE 1960S.

+MAY THE EXAMPLE OF CHE INSPIRE US EVERY DAY,+ SAID A FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE IN THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY GRANMA, WHICH PUBLISHED A PORTRAIT OF GUEVARA YESTERDAY.

IN AN ACCOMPANYING EDITORIAL, GRANMA SAID THE TRIBUTE HONOURED GUEVARA AS +THE HARBINGER OF THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION+. IT SAID HIS ROLE IN BOLIVIA AS AN +INTERNATIONALIST GUERRILLA FIGHTER+ WAS A +SUBLIME GESTURE+ FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN CASTRO'S PROCESS OF RECTIFICATION OF ERRORS.

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GUEVARA MET CASTRO IN MEXICO CITY IN 1956. GUEVARA WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WHICH CASTRO WAS TRAINING FOR A GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBAN DICTATOR FULGENCIO BATISTA. GUEVARA ACCOMPANIED CASTRO'S 82-MAN FORCE AS A MEDICAL DOCTOR.

WHEN THE FORCE WAS AMBUSHED ONLY HOURS AFTER LANDING IN EASTERN CUBA, GUEVARA, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN ACCOUNTS, DITCHED HIS BAG OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND PICKED UP A RIFLE. HE SOON BECAME ONE OF CASTRO'S TOP MILITARY COMMANDERS, RENOWNED FOR HIS AUDACITY AND FEARLESSNESS.

FOLLOWING THE TRIUMPH OF CASTRO'S RFRFI ARMY IN 1959, GUEVARA WAS MADE NATIONAL BANK PRESIDENT. HE LATER BECAME MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES.

HE OFFERED WORKERS MORAL RATHER THAN MATERIAL INCENTIVES AND ENCOURAGED THEM TO CONTRIBUTE EXTRA, UNPAID WORK HOURS TO PERPETUATE THE REVOLUTION.

THE PRESENT CUBAN RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN, DESIGNED TO BATTLE INEFFICIENCY AND CORRUPTION, HAS REVIVED THE IDEA OF VOLUNTARY WORK, WHICH WAS DISCARDED IN THE 1970S.

REUTER