





ALEIDA GUEVARA
p r e f a c e

When I read these notes for the first time, they were not yet in book form and I did not know the person who had written them. I was much younger then and I identified immediately with this man who had narrated his adventures in such a spontaneous way. Of course, as I continued reading, I began to see more clearly who this person was and I was very glad to be his daughter.

It is not my aim to tell you anything of what you will discover as you read, but I do not doubt that when you have finished the book you will want to go back to enjoy some passages again, either for the beauty they describe or the intensity of the feelings they convey.

There were moments when I literally took over Granado's place on the motorbike and clung to my dad's back, journeying with him over the mountains and around the lakes. I admit there were some occasions when I left him to himself, especially at those times when he writes so graphically things I would never talk about myself. When he does, however, he reveals yet again just how honest and unconventional he could be.

To tell you the truth, I should say that the more I read, the more in love I was with the boy my father had been. I do not know if you will share these sentiments with me, but while I was reading, I got



2 aleida guevara

to know the young Ernesto better: the Ernesto who left Argentina with his yearning for adventure and his dreams of the great deeds he would perform, and the young man who, as he discovered the reality of our continent, continued to mature as a human being and to develop as a social being.

Slowly we see how his dreams and ambitions changed. He grew increasingly aware of the pain of many others and he allowed it to become a part of himself.

The young man, who makes us smile at the beginning with his absurdities and craziness, becomes before our eyes increasingly sensitive as he tells us about the complex indigenous world of Latin America, the poverty of its people and the exploitation to which they are submitted. In spite of it all, he never loses his sense of humor, which instead becomes finer and more subtle.

My father, "*ése, el que fue*" ("myself, the man I used to be"), shows us a Latin America that few of us know about, describing its landscapes with words that color each image and reach into our senses, so that we too can see the things his eyes took in.

His prose is fresh. His words allow us to hear sounds we have never heard before, infusing us with the surroundings that struck this romantic being with their beauty and their crudity, yet he never loses his tenderness even as he becomes firmer in his revolutionary longing. His awareness grows that what poor people need is not so much his scientific knowledge as a physician, but rather his strength and persistence in trying to bring about the social change that would enable them to live with the dignity that had been taken from them and trampled on for centuries.

This young adventurer with his thirst for knowledge and his great capacity to love shows us how reality, if properly interpreted, can permeate a human being to the point of changing his or her way of thinking.

Read these notes of his that were written with so much love, eloquence and sincerity, these notes that more than anything else make me feel closer to my father. I hope you enjoy them and that you can join him on his journey.

If you ever have the opportunity to follow his footsteps in reality, you will discover with sadness that many things remain unchanged or are even worse, and this is a challenge for those of us who — like this young man who years later would become Che — are sensitive to the reality that so mistreats the most wretched among us, those of us who have a commitment to helping create a world that is much more just.

I shall leave you now with the man I knew, the man I love intensely for the strength and tenderness he demonstrated in the way he lived.

Enjoy your reading! Ever onward!

Aleida Guevara March
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