

Guevara's failure in Bolivia cannot be separated from the failure of the theory of the "foco" which had become a fad among some Marxist revolutionaries in the mid sixties. They believed that it was possible to start a revolution with only a handful of dedicated revolutionaries who would form the vanguard of a large movement which would follow after the masses became radicalized. They expected that the process of radicalization would come about from the experience of innocent civilians suffering the expected repression carried out by the government against the revolutionaries.

The defeat of Guevara and the other Cuban guerrilla leaders was a major setback for the plans to export the revolution. Castro eulogized Guevara and praised his dedication to the struggle against imperialism. But he pointed out that he had differed with Guevara over guerrilla tactics and called Guevara impetuous. Castro also pointed out that Guevara had a scorn for danger and believed that individuals were not important; that as men died new leaders would come up from the ranks and take their place in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle.

With the defeat of Guevara the militancy of the Cuban leadership was restrained. It is estimated that over 2,500 Latin Americans had been trained to lead guerrilla forces. But the Latin American Armed Forces were also receiving training from the United States military on anti-insurgency operations. The experiences gained in the Vietnam war were being used to train special forces for counterinsurgency operations in Latin America. In the 1950's the Cuban military under Batista was weak, ill-trained and had corrupt and inept leadership. The situation that Cuban-sponsored guerrilla forces faced in the late sixties was much different. The Cuban military had to go back to the drawing board and rethink the concepts which had been used to export the revolution.

Cuba and the American New Left in the 1960's

The Cuban efforts to export the revolution did not spear the United States. The anti-war movement in the United States and the American "new left" were very much influenced by the Cuban revolution and Fidel Castro. Leaders of the new left, including the leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and members of the Black Panther Party, were invited to Cuba to see first-hand the progress of the revolution. Members of these groups were converted to the Cuban political line and trained by Cuban military and intelligence

the Cuban exiles who assisted in tracking down Guevara was Julio Gabriel Garcia.