



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (004)

TITLE: *El Che Guevara*

AUTHOR: Hugo Gambini

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I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Hugo Gambini's *El Che Guevara* (1968) stands as a landmark biography, distinguished for its meticulous research, objectivity, and comprehensive portrayal of Ernesto Guevara de la Serna. Unlike many accounts riddled with "convoluted interpretations and many errors," Gambini's work was praised by John Womack Jr. in *The New York Review of Books* for its "most objective and serious" approach.

This biography traces Guevara's life from his Argentine origins to his iconic status, covering his adventurous youth, his struggles with asthma, his family's liberal-leftist influences, and the early political context of 1930s Argentina. Gambini delves into the formation of Che's character, revealing the complex interplay of personal circumstances (such as his chronic asthma and family dynamics) and the socio-political environment (including the Spanish Civil War refugees and Argentine political upheavals) that forged his revolutionary spirit.

Notably, *El Che Guevara* was banned by Argentine military dictatorships in 1969 and 1976—a testament to its unvarnished truth—and later received the Planeta Award for Best Biography in 1996 upon its reissue. This kit provides a framework for advanced study of Guevara as a multi-dimensional figure: adventurer, politician, economist, ideologue, and enduring myth.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This volume offers rich material for interdisciplinary study, combining biographical rigor with historical and psychological analysis.

Gambini's Methodology and Objectivity:

Discuss Gambini's approach to biography, emphasizing his background as an investigative journalist and his commitment to meticulous data verification. How does he navigate the complexities of writing about a highly politicized and mythologized figure?

Analyze the critical reception of the book, particularly the endorsement from *The New York Review of Books*. What does this tell us about its academic value and contribution to Guevara scholarship?

The Formation of a Revolutionary (Argentine Roots):

Explore Guevara's early life in Argentina, from his birth in Rosario to his childhood in Alta Gracia. How did his family environment (liberal parents, intellectual circle) and his personal struggles (chronic asthma, "manías peligrosas" of his father) shape his character and worldview?

Examine the socio-political context of Argentina in the 1930s and 40s (e.g., the "Década Infame," the rise of fascism, political assassinations, the Spanish Civil War refugees). How did these events contribute to Guevara's early political consciousness?



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Che as a Multi-faceted Figure:

Trace Guevara's evolution across his various roles: the adventurous youth (motorcycle journey, Amazon raft), the medical student, the guerrilla fighter (Sierra Maestra), the politician, and the economist. How does Gambini present the continuities and transformations in his ideology and actions?

Discuss the impact of his travels through Latin America (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala) on his understanding of continental realities and the need for revolution.

The Construction of the Myth:

Analyze the final chapter, "El mito." How did Guevara's death and the subsequent censorship and public portrayals contribute to his mythologization?

Discuss the role of media (photography, diaries, public narratives) in shaping perceptions of Che, both during his life and posthumously.

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and research into historical and political figures.

Biography and Ideology: Discuss the challenges of writing an "objective" biography of a figure as ideologically charged as Che Guevara. How does Gambini achieve (or strive for) objectivity, particularly concerning highly controversial events like his execution?

The Personal and the Political: Analyze the interplay between Guevara's personal experiences (childhood asthma, family dynamics, early friendships) and his later political convictions. To what extent do his early "manías peligrosas" and formative years contribute to his revolutionary drive?

Contextualizing Revolution: Compare the Argentine political landscape of Guevara's youth (e.g., Peronism, anti-Peronism, nascent fascism) with the Cuban Revolution context. How did these different historical movements influence his revolutionary path?

The Ethics of Violence: Gambini details the controversial circumstances of Che's execution and its subsequent cover-up. Discuss the ethical implications of these events and how they contributed to the enduring legacy (and controversy) of Che Guevara.

The "Myth" of El Che: Using Gambini's "El mito" chapter, analyze how the figure of Che Guevara was constructed and perpetuated, both by his supporters and detractors. What elements of his life were emphasized or suppressed in the process of mythologization?

Comparing Revolutionary Figures: Compare Guevara's approach to revolution and social change with other Latin American revolutionary figures (e.g., Fidel Castro, Simón Bolívar, or even figures from the Mexican Revolution). What are the continuities and divergences in their methods and philosophies?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Text:

- Gambini, Hugo. *El Che Guevara*. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 004)

Key Secondary Scholarship & Referenced Figures:

- Alberdi, Juan Bautista. *Peregrinación de Luz del Día*. (For comparative political thought).



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- **Arguedas, Antonio.** (Former Bolivian Minister, key source on Che's death).
- **Constenla, Julia.** (Journalist who interviewed Celia de la Serna).
- **Johnson, Paul.** *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties.* (For broader 20th-century political context).
- **Marx, Karl.** (For theoretical background on communism).
- **Mittelman, Bela.** (Medical expert on psychosomatic asthma).
- **Womack Jr., John.** Review in *The New York Review of Books*.

Additional Resources:

- Historical studies of the Cuban Revolution and its impact on Latin America.
- Biographies of Fidel Castro and other key figures of the Cuban Revolution.
- Studies on 20th-century Argentine history and politics (Peronism, military dictatorships).

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

- [Hispanic Heritage Thinkers: 7-Book Bundle.](#)
- Other titles by Hugo Gambini: [Historia del peronismo III - la violencia.](#)
- Works by Armando Ribas for comparative political philosophy.

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