# Che relics buried in Bolivia?

Fifth Estate Collective

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MEXICO CITY, May 15 — The hands of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a death mask made before his body disappeared and three bullets removed from the body, are all hidden away on a Bolivian mountainside.

This statement was made by Antonio Arguedas, former Interior Minister of Bolivia in an exclusive interview with *Siempre* magazine published here.

Arguedas, who arrived in this capital on April 22, after living for nine months in political asylum in the Mexican Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia, explained in the *Siempre* interview how the hands, the deathmask, and the bullets reached him.

According to Arguedas, Che's hands were placed at the disposal of Argentine experts in charge of checking the finger prints.

Technicians Esteba Rezhauzer, Nicolas Pellicari and Juan Carlos Delgado stated in their report: "We received a closed metal container containing two hands submerged in a liquid that smelled like formol, a strong disinfectant used to preserve different substances".

The report explained how the experts made tests that led to the identification of the prints of those hands with the ones on identity card no. 3,524,272 issued by the Argentine Federal Police in the name Ernesto Guevara.

All this occurred in La Paz.

Later, the hands reached Arguedas, who explained: "I didn't know the hands were there in the Ministry. They were brought by Cuban CIA agent Gabriel Garcia, who worked in the Ministry. He planned on talking me into giving him the hands, which he planned to donate to the Miami gusanos (Cuban counterrevolutionaries) as war trophies".

Continued Arguedas: "When I was told that Che's hands were being kept in a safe, I ordered them brought to me right away in my office.

Naturally I consulted the matter with General Ovando, who cleverly made no decision at all. I then went to Barrientos (the late President of Bolivia) who ordered me to throw them out, to destroy them, to do anything with them, just as long as there were no more uproars".

Arguedas said that all this fitted in with his own plans: "The first thing I did was to change the container. They came in one filled with formol, and I put them in a larger one with alcohol. I placed this container, wrapped in the flags of Argentina, Cuba, and Bolivia, inside a Tihuanaco-style box lined with red velvet. Inside the box is a silver plate with golden letters reading 'Major Ernesto Guevara' and the date of his birth and death.

"The Tihuanaco-style box is itself inside a zinc chest, painted on the inside with black pitch. The whole thing is soldered, and cushioned with special plastics, some of them to make sure the container with the hands cannot break, and the others as a protection against dampness. Red letters say: 'This box contains the hands of Major Ernesto Guevara'".

Arguedas went on to explain: “I did all the work of inserting the container, the flags, applying the pitch, the blowtorch job on the zinc chest, by myself. When the whole thing was finished, I took the outer chest, which weighs around ten kilos, put it in my car and left the city. I left the car parked on a curve on the highway of the Andean tropical region Los Yuncas. There is a snowcovered peak, one face of which looks towards the tropical region and the other towards the highlands”.

The former minister of the Bolivian government ended his account with these words: “It was there that I deposited my treasure. Some day the hands, the death mask and the bullets will be given to Che’s wife, Aleida March. One of the flags will go to Argentina, the other will remain in Bolivia and the other will go to Cuba. They will be received by the student federations. I took abundant pictures of the area. But I am the only one who knows the exact spot”.



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