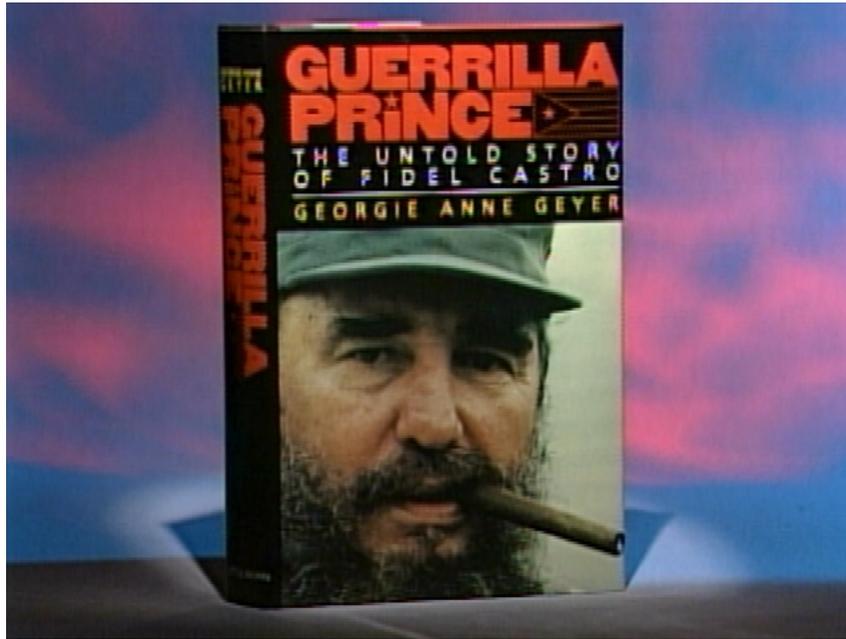


Guerrilla Prince: Author Describes Fidel Castro's Childhood

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Description

Author Georgie Anne Geyer discusses her book "Guerrilla Prince: The Untold Story of Fidel Castro". She explains how as a boy, Castro used to carry around a copy of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and studied the tactics of the Axis Powers.

Keywords

Fidel Castro, Cuba, Revolution, Cuban Missile Crisis, Wars of Liberation, History, Communism, Socialism, Communists, Guerrilla Prince, Author, Book, Georgie Anne Geyer, Childhood, Biography, Spanish-American War, War With Spain, Politics, Military, Wife, Mirta Diaz-Balart, Family, Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Mi Lucha, Benito Mussolini, Axis Powers, Nazis, Tactics, Strategy

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CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

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Transcript

GUERRILLA PRINCE: AUTHOR DESCRIBES FIDEL CASTRO'S CHILDHOOD

KATHERINE COURIC, co-host:

It was just over 30 years ago when a lean, virile revolutionary named Fidel Castro seized both the world's spotlight and power in Cuba. According to Soviets, Fidel the communist offered Cuba his vision of socio-economic fairness. Always in contrast to the hated United States. The Cuban missile crisis, once took the world to the brink of Armageddon, and Castro's export of arms, men and medicine has stretched from Angola to Nicaragua and many so-called wars of liberation. Now with communism in chaos, an aged Castro and an impoverished and isolated Cuba once again sit at the crossroads of history. Now in a new book, "Guerrilla Prince: The Untold Story of Fidel Castro," we get an inside glimpse of the dark side of this man and his myth. Joining us this morning is author and veteran Latin American correspondent, Georgie Anne Geyer. Good morning to you.

GEORGIE ANNE GEYER ("Guerrilla Prince"): Good morning Katie.

COURIC: Let's first talk about Fidel as a young boy. What sort of forces shaped his personality very early on?

GEYER: Well Katie, first of all his father was from Spain. A very gross but very clever man, uneducated. Fought in the war of 1898 on the side of the Spanish, against the Cubans and against the Americans. So this gave Fidel, who was illegitimate, it gave him a feeling of double illegitimacy. Because he was politically illegitimate and—and illegitimate in his family.

COURIC: He suffered from a real inferiority complex, didn't he?

GEYER: Well, some people think he suffered from a great superiority complex. But I think you're absolutely right. Underneath his—his mastery of the military and his—his superior prancing around the stages of history, his militarism. You know Fidel is really a classic Spanish condito. Everything in—in—in Cuba is militarized. The most militarized country probably in the world, not only the communist world.

So yeah, there is the--probably underneath the inferiority and above that this grandiosity, which is just extraordinary.

COURIC: Let's talk a little bit about his interpersonal relationships. He was married from what? 1948 to 1953. How did he interact with his wife, Myrta?

GEYER: Very, very badly. He was a terrible husband and a terrible father. She was a very beautiful, upper-class daughter of the Diaz Ballard family. A lovely woman. Still lives in Madrid, has remarried. Got married in '48, had one child, Fidelito, in '49. Then were divorced in '53. And Fidel would be--would come home and Myrta and the little boy would be there, as a baby, without milk, without heat, without electricity. And Fidel would have 20,000 dollars for arms in his pocket. And he wouldn't give her a dollar. And he took great pride in that.

COURIC: You also write that his role models included Mussolini and Hitler. He used to walk around school with a copy of "Mien Kompf."

GEYER: Yes Katie, he was at the Jesuit high school, a very classy school in Havana. And his heroes were Hitler and Mussolini and Prima De Revera, the Spanish phalangist. And he would walk around with "La Lucha," which is "Mien Kompf" in Spanish, and he plotted the axis victories on a map in his room. And I-I don't say in the book that Fidel was a Nazi. I mean that's not correct. He was looking for ways to power. He was looking for tactics and strategies.

COURIC: And he was really never a true communist, you contend, he was just power hungry and he saw that as a vehicle to attract the masses.

GEYER: Exactly. I call him in the last chapter, the last communist. But he was never a communist. He was never--was never anything collective about his work. It was always Fidel at the top and everybody else beneath him. Obedient to Fidel. Nothing communist about him.

COURIC: Does he still have a grip on the Cuban people?

GEYER: All of the information is that probably about 30 percent of them are really still under his--what I call his spell. But that he's losing it and he knows he is losing it. You see, this is the problem.

COURIC: And quickly, you say that if he thinks he's going down, he will be not--he will not be going peacefully. How do you think he'll end up?

GEYER: I'm very worried Katie, I think Fidel Castro and Cuba could be our next conflict and our next crisis. Because he will not go quietly into the night, he won't go down, go into exile or anything. He will attack Florida or something like that. He's a man of tremendous grandiosity.

COURIC: Well the book, "Guerrilla Prince," the author Georgie Anne Geyer. Thank you so much for joining us this morning.