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From Cuba to Palestine: The enduring spirit of Che Guevara inspires global resistance

written by Colby Byrd
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Che Guevara in Camagüey, Cuba, testing the new machinery for the harvest of the sugarcane, 1963. Photo by Cuban photographer Alberto Korda, who also took the iconic portrait of Che that is now emblazoned on countless banners and T-shirts.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was killed Oct. 9, 1967. Che was an Argentine-born doctor who contributed tremendously to the Cuban Revolution, both in the military struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and in the building of socialism after 1959. He also participated in the African liberation struggle, fighting alongside anti-colonial forces in the Congo. Che died at only 39 years old during another epic of internationalist solidarity in Bolivia. While organizing with guerrillas there, he was

captured by CIA-trained and directed Bolivian paramilitaries. Che's example lives on. For almost 60 years since his death, he has inspired revolutionaries from the Black Panthers, right in the belly of the beast, to contemporary Palestinian freedom fighters. Following, Colby Byrd, a worker living in Baltimore, honors Che Guevara as a revolutionary force against oppression.



Colby Byrd

Che Guevara's story is not just about an individual. Rather, it captures the many stories of all those who worked, fought, struggled, and died during the Cuban Revolution. It is the collection of all of those stories, all of those lives lived and ended, that freed Cuba from its imperialist domination. This focus on others is important to keep close to the heart of any revolutionary struggle at any level of intensity.

Before his execution, Che proclaimed these final words: "I know you've come to kill me. Shoot, you are only going to kill a man."

Before he was a revolutionary, he was a person — a man with passion, dreams, and love. This movement, this forever struggle against the ever-invasive tendrils of imperialism, this epic endeavor ... is championed by normal people.

Che and the fighting people of the Cuban Revolution were students, workers, peasants, parents, and children. It was only when they entwined themselves with the struggle that they became revolutionaries. Fred Hampton said that you can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill The Revolution. Che Guevara was executed — murdered by imperialist forces — yet Cuba stands, defying U.S. imperialism to this day. Countless people have fallen victim across the world, bombed, beaten, and battered by U.S. imperialism, and still today, people go out and fight in the name of international solidarity. The love of our class siblings guides us to challenge the systems that brutalize us every day.

“Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.” — Che Guevara

This Love that Che speaks about is not your typical love. It is not the same love you have for your favorite foods, your fond memories of the past, your hobbies and passions. It is not even the love you may share with a significant other. No, the Love Che speaks of is different. It manifests differently in everyone and is not fully explainable.

It is a transformative, ever-amplifying, and anarchic feeling that leads people to abandon or break the capitalist shackles that restrained them; to lift their arms and voices in the creation of a better future shaped by the collective struggle. The struggle is enacted by this tremendous feeling of love.

This love can be seen today in both the direct struggle in Palestine and in the international support for that struggle. To put it plainly, the Palestinian Resistance of today is fighting for its people's very right to exist. And I do not just mean the

fighters engaged in direct combat against the U.S.-backed Israeli Occupation Forces and roaming gangs of Zionist settlers. I mean everyone. Every living soul that continues to stay and find a way to survive against the genocidal occupation.

In this digital age, all forms of defiance are captured and uploaded online to be shared and immortalized by all who come into contact with it. During this time of relentless Israeli brutality, it is not just images of combat that show defiance, but also images of people sharing what little food they have with animals; videos of people cleaning the debris out of their homes or what is left of them, and moving back in to stay; videos of children expressing that they are unafraid of the Zionist enemy.

Many other depictions of love for their culture and way of life are documented and shared across the world.

Around the world, this love is seen as millions take to the streets, demanding an end to the slaughter of their class siblings in occupied Palestine. Students on campuses creating tent encampments, workers striking in support of the Resistance, and more and more people seeing the horror for what it is and finding a way to say enough is enough.

People around the world are joining the struggle however they can. Through any means available the people of the world are showing their solidarity with the struggle in Palestine.

The People of Cuba, forever fighting alongside those in the struggle, are offering free schooling to the people of Palestine on critical skills they will need to rebuild their society. The people of China and Russia meet with Palestinian dignitaries and leaders of the Resistance, offering aid and assistance wherever they can.

Forget about the lines on maps that divide us and focus on the real human emotions

that connect us all. This love lives there.

Marcellus Williams, a man murdered by the state of Missouri, in his last moments, wrote a poem honoring the resilience of Palestinian children in the face of their evil oppressors. Marcellus Williams, chained on death row, locked far away from the struggle outside, felt something within him. He felt something pull on that little red string of Fate, and in those final moments, it wasn't a message of hate that came out.

He didn't curse the state for its illegal and barbarous actions; he didn't ask for forgiveness or look to a future that wasn't coming. No, as he was meeting his end, he championed within himself the resilience of the Palestinian children who go out every day and live their lives, not knowing if that day could be their last. Over two million people attempted to get the decision to execute Marcellus Williams reversed. Over two million people felt the love in their hearts move them enough to fight back against the system within the belly of the beast.

The struggle needs more Che Guevaras and Marcellus Williams. Normal people guided by love to achieve or face down the unimaginable. Through love, connections and communication can form. Through connection and communication rises organization and collective power. Finally, this collective power – reinforced and powered by the People, shaped into a united fist – will fight Imperial domination wherever it resides.

