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Che Guevara: His Revolutionary Legacy

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* **Che Guevara: His Revolutionary Legacy, by Olivier Besancenot and Michael Löwy. Monthly Review Press. Translated by James Membrez.**

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“Much has been written—and filmed and painted and sung and danced—about the legendary Che Guevara. This essential book rescues him from the celebrity that threatens to overwhelm his memory, and presents Che, not as movie star or sex symbol, but as a man who linked his consciousness to his conduct, fought and died for a more peaceful and humane world, and whose democratic dreams and humanist approach to politics resonate with new energy and urgency today. Che reminds us that another world is indeed possible, and that our duty is to put our shoulders to the wheel.”

—**Bill Ayers**, University of Illinois, Chicago,
author of *Fugitive Days* and, with Bernardine Dohrn, *Race Course: Against White Supremacy*

“A thoughtful discussion of Che’s career as a revolutionary leader and of his ideas on socialism, the ‘New Man’ and revolutionary praxis. This book offers a passionate defense of Guevara’s relevance for our times and the influence of his legacy on current struggles from the Zapatistas to Venezuela, Bolivia and the World Social Forums. Recognising both Che’s greatness and his limitations, the authors make a vigorous if debatable case for a fusion of his thought with the Trotskyist thesis of ‘permanent revolution,’ and insist correctly on the vital importance of participatory democracy, radical anticapitalist struggle, and socialist internationalism in developing a new alternative. ”

—**Diana Raby**, University of Liverpool,
author of *Democracy & Revolution: Latin America and Socialism Today*

“Food for thought for all of us hungry to build that new world of hope that Che continues to embody, this book beautifully presents Che—the humanist Marxist, the critic of the cardboard Marxism of the Soviet texts, the revolutionary internationalist. ‘Be like Che,’ encourage the authors—not by

memorizing fixed manuals or through hagiography but by an absolute commitment to a socialist future and to learning as you go. This is a book about Che, our contemporary. ”

—**Michael A. Lebowitz**

professor emeritus of economics at Simon Fraser University,
author of *Build It Now and Beyond Capital*.

“Deep inside that T-shirt where we have tried to trap him,” notes the celebrated Chilean novelist Ariel Dorfman, “the eyes of Che Guevara are still burning with impatience.” Olivier Besancenot and Michael Löwy deftly capture this burning impatience, revealing Guevara as a powerful political and ethical thinker still capable of speaking directly to the challenges of our time.

In this masterful new study, Besancenot and Löwy explore and situate Guevara’s ethical, revolutionary, and humanist legacy. They explicate Guevara’s emphasis on the importance of the individual coming to understand and accept socialism at a personal level. For Guevara, Besancenot and Löwy show, the revolutionary project demands more than a transformation of the mode of production; it demands a profound transformation of the individual, the birth of what Guevara termed the ‘new man.’ Besancenot and Löwy also explore Guevara’s pragmatic approach to the question of state power and unique theoretical contributions to the question of the transition to socialism.

In Guevara, Besancenot and Löwy find a life that was lived as an example of revolutionary potential. Guevara’s ethical and political sensibilities, unwavering anti-imperialism, and firm commitment to revolutionary social transformation still ignite hope in all who struggle for a better world.

P.S.

* From Monthly Review Press:

<http://www.monthlyreview.org/books/...>

* Olivier Besancenot lives in France, where he works as a postal carrier. He received 1,498,581 votes in the first round of the French presidential elections in 2007.

Michael Löwy is Research Director in Sociology at the National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris.